

# **Echoes Down the Centuries**



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Foreign Languages Publishing House  
Pyongyang, Korea  
Juche 103(2014)

## Preface

President Kim Il Sung is the founding father of the socialist Korea. In the dark years of national ruin when the Koreans were subjected to the Japanese imperialists' military occupation, he founded the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and declared a war against the imperialist Japan. The army was a successful weapon for the leader to defeat the aggressors and win the historic cause of national liberation. After liberation he organized the Workers' Party of Korea, the general staff of the Korean revolution, established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as desired by all the Korean people, and developed the KPRA into the Korean People's Army, revolutionary regular armed force. By leading the Fatherland Liberation War to victory he shattered the armed invasion of the Americans who attempted to strangle the young DPRK. He built a powerful socialist industrial state in the land of Korea that had been ravaged in the war.

Leading the revolution and construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to victory throughout his life, President Kim Il Sung performed exploits of lasting value for the time and history and accumulated a rich stock of experience in socialist construction. He also made a tangible contribution to

the cause of independence of humankind, and his great personality is enshrined in the hearts of the Korean people and the distinguished figures and progressive people around the world. There are many anecdotes about his insight and clairvoyance, profound knowledge of all things of the world, unusual spirit and rich emotion, immeasurable caliber and warm humanity. This book gives some of the anecdotes associated with his external activities.

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# **1. Man of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

## **Stalin's Toast**

Stalin used to be called the “great man of the world” when he was alive. Those who aspired to socialism and communism held him in high regard as “father of mankind” and “invincible generalissimo” while the Westerners stigmatized him as “red demon” or “iron fist.”

The Soviet leader was generally known as a man of reticence. He seldom opened his heart to other people. Praising others was something least expected of him. But there was an exceptional event of his manner.

In March 1949 Kim Il Sung, leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, paid an official goodwill visit to the Soviet Union at Stalin’s invitation. The Soviet Party, government and people accorded him a hearty welcome.

Stalin gave a grand banquet in honour of the Korean leader’s visit, which was participated in by high-ranking officials of the Soviet Party and government and foreign envoys. When the banquet began, Stalin made a toast. Commending his guest as an outstanding leader acknowledged by the whole world and as a great hero who

had performed immortal exploits in defending the Soviet revolution, he concluded his speech by saying, “Comrade Kim Il Sung is a true proletarian internationalist and a paragon of the communist movement who defended the Soviet Union with blood and arms against the imperialist aggression in the East. That the Soviet Union is now engaged in socialist construction in a peaceful environment is attributable to the struggle of genuine communists like Comrade Kim Il Sung. Availing myself of this significant opportunity, I would like to ask you all my comrades and friends to make warm applause to offer heartfelt thanks to Comrade Kim Il Sung.”

Thunderous applause burst forth shaking the banquet hall. All the people at present clapped enthusiastically, casting respectful glances to the Korean leader. And they were surprised to hear Stalin, veteran leader of the world revolution who had little betrayed his inner feelings, make such a toast of respect and thankfulness, and that in the presence of foreign diplomatic representatives. It was really unusual of him. As a matter of fact, toasts made at banquets in honour of foreign guests are a routine order of usages to welcome the guests, so they usually consist in greetings and wishes for development of bilateral relations and good health of the guests. Nevertheless, Stalin, putting aside such diplomatic usages, gave vent to his respect for the leader of the Oriental nation.

## **Mao Zedong's Request**

President Kim Il Sung arrived in Beijing, China, on April 18, 1975 for a visit. Deng Xiaoping, the then deputy chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, greeted the Korean leader cordially at the railway station. “Chairman Mao is counting every hour and minute to hear of your arrival,” Deng said, and added that the Chairman had been eagerly waiting since early that morning for the minute he would meet his Korean comrade.

That day Kim Il Sung went to see Mao Zedong who was looking forward to seeing him although he was bedridden for a serious illness. The moment he saw the Korean leader, Mao took him by the hand warmly, saying, “I’m so glad to see you. I’ve been expecting you every minute since this morning.” His eyes were moist.

Kim Il Sung asked solicitously about his health.

Expressing his thanks, the Chinese leader said in an excited voice that he had been staying away in Hunan, Shanxi and Henan provinces for a year until he had returned to Beijing a week before to see the DPRK leader on his China visit, that he had been immersed in longing for him throughout the week, and that he had had little sleep for the happy expectation of meeting his comrade.

The friendly conversation between the two leaders went on for good hours, exchanging opinions frankly about the situations of

their countries and complicated international political problems. Mao agreed fully with Kim Il Sung on his views and stand toward the international political matters concerned.

In the middle of the talk, Mao blurted, “The Lord of Hades is calling me now.” Although it was sort of a joke, his words sounded rather lonely and sorrowful.

**“It’s too early to go to see the Lord of Hades,”** disagreed Kim Il Sung, **“for you have still a lot of things to do. I hope you’ll get well as soon as possible.”** His voice rang quite cordial.

Mao shook his head slowly, lamenting, “I know I’m hopeless. My body is disobedient.”

Kim Il Sung, understanding his worries about the end of his life, gave a kindly advice saying, **“Please don’t lose heart. I’m sure you’ll be able to have a longer life if you take good care of your health. I hope you’ll put your heart and soul into your treatment with confidence.”**

Many hours passed and it was high time to say good-bye. Now Mao Zedong took Kim Il Sung by the hand firmly and said, “I’m afraid this is perhaps our last farewell. It is a great pleasure having you, world-famous great man, as my closest comrade and brother.” Then, he told Kim Il Sung that he hoped he would pay close attention to the world revolution and the international communist movement and that it was his last request.

As he foresaw, the day’s farewell turned out to be the last one between the two national leaders.

## **Tito's Visit to the DPRK**

In August 1977, an arrangement was made for Josip Broz Tito, president of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, to visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. (He was 85 at the time.) His plan of Korea visit became a focus of the press around the world. The newspapers, radios and news agencies gave comments on his schedule after their own guesses and opinions. A British news agency, an influential authority in the press world, reported, “Strangely enough, Tito is a figure who is not only celebrated in both the socialist and capitalist camps but also influential in the non-aligned nations. He is well known as one of the initiators of the Non-Aligned Movement and progenitor of the autonomous socialism. His strong self-pride, in particular, has established him as ‘obstinate giant’. What is the only founding leader—still alive—of the Non-Aligned Movement seeking to achieve by travelling the far-off Oriental region? It seems he wants to meet President Kim Il Sung of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to unravel the problems of the Non-Aligned Movement which is in distress at the moment and give a shot in the arm of the movement.”

The comment was in no way naïve. At the time the Non-Aligned Movement was in a fix: on one hand the imperialists and dominationists were working in either openly or secretly to disintegrate the movement, and on the other hand, some member

nations that were poorly aware of the revolutionary principle were thinking ill of each other or even having a scramble, taken in by the imperialist and dominationist forces.

Tito was extremely anxious to save the Non-Aligned Movement from the abnormal situation and get it back on track. He knew that if he failed to pull the movement out of the mire he would lose his life's achievements, to say nothing of saving his face as one of the progenitors and veterans of the movement.

One day he said to his assistants, "There remains only one way out. We must go to Korea and consult Comrade Kim Il Sung."

His assistants advised him to reconsider the idea as he was advanced in age and in a frail condition.

Tito flatly denied their opinion, saying, "I have to see Kim Il Sung without fail. Nobody is allowed to change my decision."

This was how Tito set out on a journey to Korea.

President Kim Il Sung met the Yugoslavian leader on August 24, 1977. At talks following the meeting, Tito gave a detailed account of the situation of the Non-Aligned Movement that had kept him in anxiety all along. He said, "At present the imperialists and reactionaries are making every effort to disrupt the Non-Aligned Movement and make the member nations fight each other. To make matters worse, the Socialist International and some forces are presenting the concept of the *Third World* to have it stand against the non-aligned countries. I'm afraid

this is the biggest apprehension.”

His face was very serious—perhaps because he had long been harassed by the problem.

Kim Il Sung said to Tito that in general imperialism was going downhill while the anti-imperialism was gaining force steadily, that the Non-Aligned Movement was continuously growing despite the destructive moves of the imperialists, that the growth of the movement meant so much growth of the anti-imperialist force, and that the sufferings of the movement were a transient and partial phenomenon although it was true the movement was confronted with a number of difficulties. He said emphatically, “**The imperialists are making desperate attempts to destroy the unity of the non-aligned countries... I think the split among the African and Middle Eastern countries is due to the plots of the imperialists. The imperialists are afraid of the non-aligned countries' solidarity.**”

He continued to say that the strife between non-aligned countries was also to be found among the Southeast Asian nations, as well as the African and Middle Eastern countries, and that it was the result of the imperialist instigation and aftermath of the colonial rule.

“You’re quite right,” Tito agreed. “It’s all thanks to the imperialists. But I don’t know how to solve the problem since it’s too complicated a task to prevent the division.”

Understanding his anxiety, Kim Il Sung said, “**I think the harder the imperialists tried to splinter the Non-Aligned**

**Movement and the more complicated the dispute was between non-aligned countries, the more often they should have had meetings. I'm afraid the conference of foreign ministers of the non-aligned nations alone is impossible to settle all problems that arise in the movement.”**

The Yugoslav President looked at Kim Il Sung hopefully, who went on to say, “**I think prime ministers or deputy heads of state can often meet at proper times even if it may be impossible to have a summit meeting of the non-aligned countries. Only then, will we be able to solve disagreements among the non-aligned nations and have better economic cooperation among us.”**

“That’s really wise of you,” Tito responded. “Yours is a good idea to solve many of the problems that are impossible at the conference of foreign ministers. I fully agree to your opinion.” A broad smile appeared on his wrinkled face. Then, he resumed his words, “At the moment some are asserting the concept of the Third World and trying to make it stand against the non-aligned countries. I’d be obliged if you could tell me your opinion about the matter.”

**“The phrase of the Third World dates back to a long time ago,”** Kim Il Sung explained. **“Of course, I haven’t yet heard anyone give a formal definition of the concept of the Third World. At first we thought the countries around the world could be divided into groups of socialist, capitalist and newly independent nations. It doesn’t matter what kind**

**of nations the Third World includes now. The Non-Aligned Movement involves socialist countries as well. That's why we're sure that it is improper to distinguish the Third World nations from the non-aligned ones. We think it natural to put the Third World nations in the same category as the non-aligned nations since the non-aligned countries make up the core of the Third World camp.”** He stopped to study the response of his counterpart.

Tito jerked up his head, saying, “That’s right. Your words are a new definition of the Third World. I fully agree with you.”

### **Ho Chi Minh’s Regret**

The Vietnamese were fond of calling President Ho Chi Minh “Uncle Ho.” The popular name was symbolic of their respect for his achievements as the pioneer and leader of the Vietnamese revolution. As a matter of fact, it was entirely thanks to Ho Chi Minh that the country was liberated from the imperialist shackles of colonialism and set out on the road of socialism. So, he well deserved such a popular title. Nevertheless, he often spoke that Kim Il Sung, the great leader of the Korean people, deserved more respect than he did. The words came from the bottom of his heart.

The Vietnamese President met the Korean leader in July 1957. Around the time the socialist revolution had been proclaimed in North Vietnam, followed by a full swing of

socialist construction. Yet promoting the socialist revolution, Ho had found himself encountering quite a number of baffling problems, including how to rehabilitate the industry that had been devastated by the imperialists' colonial rule, how to transform the relations of production along socialist lines and how to solve the problems of the peasantry and the intellectuals. To him, they were all strange matters from the beginning to the end. Hoping to get the key to the solution of the problems, he had decided to visit Korea.

Kim Il Sung gave a warm welcome to Ho on his arrival at the airport. Thereafter, he personally took him to different places of the country that was making headway on Chollima, including factories, rural communities and schools, while talking of his experience in socialist construction.

Before bidding farewell, he had talks with his guest. When the talks began, Ho said that although he had stayed in Korea for no more than three days he had learned quite a lot and that he now had a better idea that Kim Il Sung had accumulated a great stock of experience in the building of a new society. Then, he asked for a detailed account of the experience attained in organizing agricultural cooperatives, the fundamental fighting task of the Workers' Party of Korea, state policies on different fields such as industry, agriculture, trade, education and culture, the matters of the intellectuals and the united front. His request was too much for the talks that were limited to a few hours according to diplomatic usages.

But President Kim Il Sung was generous enough to comply with his request. He said, “**It would take me long hours to answer your questions, so what about having a direct conversation in Chinese? Then we can easily communicate with each other without the help of the interpreters.**”

Earlier in 1924 Ho attended the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, when he was put in charge of the organization’s Department of Oriental Affairs. He then worked in China as representative of the Third International in Southeast Asia. Such being his background he was a good Chinese speaker. Aware of his career, Kim Il Sung asked to have dialogue in Chinese without interpretation.

Enumerating certain figures and examples, the Korean leader told succinctly about the Korean achievements and experience in the effort to rehabilitate and develop the national economy and improve the people’s living standards beginning from the condition after the Korean war and the basic line of economic construction adopted by his government.

President Ho wrote down the words in his book with care, sometimes asking to repeat the explanation.

In this way the talks went nearly two hours. Now Kim Il Sung said he was going to be brief as it was high time for a farewell party. Ho, feeling sorry, asked not to be too brief, though. “I wish you would make detailed statements even if it would take rather a lot of time,” he said earnestly.

Understanding his desire to learn even one more thing about

Korea, Kim Il Sung complied with all his requests.

At the close of the talks, Ho said respectfully, “I’ve learned a lot from your priceless experience today. I’d like to offer my heartfelt thanks to you for this. I’m happy to have learned a good deal in your country. One thing I regret is that my stay has been too short. Frankly speaking, I wish to stay here longer to have your advices. I earnestly hope you will visit Vietnam.”

Kim Il Sung accepted his invitation with pleasure.

### **Fidel’s Assurance**

Fidel Castro is a renowned revolutionary who led the Cuban revolution to victory that was started by means of seven rifles, and established the first socialist state in the western hemisphere. He is a world-famous speaker who feels “little tired even if he speaks 400 days a year.”

President Kim Il Sung met Fidel Castro, the then President of the Council of State of Cuba, on March 8, 1986. On the occasion Fidel said, “I’ve heard your acquaintances say you are a modest, emotional, enthusiastic and kind-hearted person. They hold you in high respect and admiration. Every time I heard such praises I felt an urge to visit your country to meet you. You were already engaged in the fighting against the Japanese imperialists when I was born. So, I thought it my obligation to come and see you.”

Fidel said he was sorry that he had failed to come to see the

Korean leader earlier. That was in no way a formal courtesy. Fidel was born in 1926, when Kim Il Sung launched a total struggle against the Japanese imperialists by forming the Down-with-Imperialism Union. Such being the history, Fidel held the Korean leader in high respect as his senior and regarded it as his obligation to come to Korea and see him. On one occasion he received a Korean delegation and said to them, "I would like to visit your country to see President Kim Il Sung and exchange opinions on many issues. I know he is an experienced and prestigious man. He is a genius. I know he cannot come to Cuba. So, I ought to go to see him."

Now Fidel said to Kim Il Sung that on his way to Korea by air he had read the report the Korean leader made to the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, sometimes even skipping his sleep, that he thought to learn from Korean experience would be of a great help to the effort to free the Latin-American countries from poverty and hunger, that he was no more than a student of his and that he wanted to learn a lot on the occasion.

Understanding his mind, Kim Il Sung gave answers to all his questions without exception. The dialogue went in lounges, running cars and over the walk in the garden, to say nothing of formal occasions. Fidel asked hundreds of questions, and they were so varying and wide-ranging—e.g. the international political situation in a shambles, the relationship of influence of the powers, principled matters in socialist construction, the degree of cleaning of rice supplied to people, the time of origin

of the Korean alphabet, and even whether the cattle eat rice bran. Even his assistants were surprised to see Fidel ask so many questions like a student, for they had never seen him so curious at talks with innumerable heads of state from across the world.

Kim Il Sung told him a lot, hoping to satisfy his curiosity.

Fidel was so moved that he said to Kim Il Sung, “Your words are rich in content and easy to understand whatever you talk about. You are really a great man with a rich stock of knowledge and an unusual memory.”

He was so impressed from Kim Il Sung that he spoke to his officials, “I’ve learned a lot while visiting Korea. When I return I’m going to call a meeting of the political bureau and suggest we learn from esteemed Comrade Kim Il Sung’s personality and the Korean experience. I know I’m right when I’ve tried hard to see, hear and learn a lot in Korea.”

Fidel spoke out at a rally held in the Pyongyang Indoor Stadium before his departure, “I and my comrades would like to assure you that we will keep publicizing the revolutionary cause of Korea, the Korean people’s bravery and creativity, and the talent and personality of Comrade Kim Il Sung, who is a great, wise and sagacious leader.”

### **Sukarno and Kimilsungia**

Some 60 km south of Jakarta there is located the world-famous Bogor Botanical Garden, called “Flowerbed of

Indonesia.” Established in 1817, the garden keeps more than 2 000 species of beautiful flowering plants, over 200 species of banana trees, and various kinds of cactuses—as many as 10 000 species of tropical plants in all. The garden was under close concern of Sukarno, founder of the National Party of Indonesia and first President of the Republic of Indonesia, in the run-up to the tenth anniversary of the Bandung Conference.

One of those days Sukarno visited the garden for a stroll, hoping to relieve himself of the stress from overwork. He was guided by the director of the garden. Walking around he enjoyed different kinds of marvellous flowers of all shapes and fragrance. Presently he stopped in front of a flower which looked conspicuously attractive. Flower stalks came out from the bamboo-like stem and hung down gracefully with bright pink-purple flower buds at the end. Seeing the President quite interested in the plant, the director of the garden told a story about it.

The flowering plant, belonging to the orchid family, had been bred by an old botanist. He had made painstaking efforts for dozens of years to breed the flower as the crown of his life dedicated to the cultivation of flowering plants. He succeeded in his effort just the year before. Now he did all he could to bring the plant into bloom. Around that time he heard that Kim Il Sung, leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, was going to visit Indonesia to attend commemorations of the tenth anniversary of the Bandung Conference. The veteran botanist had been an admirer of the Korean leader who

defeated two imperialist powers of the US and Japan in his generation and established a genuine socialist system in the East for the sake of the people. He decided to bring his new plant into the most beautiful bloom in the world—marking the first anniversary of the birth of the plant—and present the flowers to Kim Il Sung himself when he was in Indonesia. Unfortunately, however, he died leaving his wish behind. When he knew he was about to meet his last moment, he handed the plant over to the director of the garden, his friend, and asked earnestly to have the plant bloom without fail and give it to Kim Il Sung in place of him.

Faithful to his will, the director made sincere efforts to bring the plant into bloom. The veteran botanists of the garden turned out to help him, regarding it a great honour and pride of the Bogor Botanical Garden to present the rare and most beautiful flower to Kim Il Sung. Supported by such a sincere heart the new kind of flower, associated with the lifelong endeavour of the botanist, came into budding at last.

Having heard the story Sukarno observed the flower buds with care again. Then he made meaningful nods, asking to bring it into bloom without fail before the Korean leader arrived in Indonesia, as wished by the late botanist. He said that he wanted to be reported on the progress of the work every day.

The director of the garden carried out the President's instructions creditably. A few days before the tenth anniversary of the Bandung Conference extremely beautiful flowers came

into full bloom on the plant.

Sukarno rushed to the garden. He adoringly eyed the flower, the one whose beauty and fragrance might excel any other flowers in the world. The gracefully simple and pure colour of bright pink-purple blossoms, sturdy stems symbolic of strong spirit, and the green leaves full of youth and freshness were entralling.

“Great!” Sukarno exclaimed in excitement—again and again. He then took the director of the garden and botanists by the hand and excitedly said, “We can present this rarely beautiful flower to his Excellency Premier Kim Il Sung.”

The director told they hadn’t named the flower yet.

“I’m sorry such a beautiful flower has no name yet,” Sukarno said. “We should give it a name, the most prestigious name in the world. I have an idea.” He wore a full smile for his satisfaction.

The director and botanists couldn’t tell for what the President was beaming with a smile.

Days passed, and Kim Il Sung visited the garden. Sukarno ushered the Korean leader to the place where the flower was, and told the story about the flower.

Appreciating the sincerity of the late botanist, the director of the garden and other botanists associated with the flower, Kim Il Sung enjoyed the beautiful blossoms for a good while before saying in a sentimental voice, **“The flower is really beautiful.”**

Sukarno was glad to hear it, saying, “Please allow us to call this flower Kimilsungia after your august name. This is a unanimous desire of me and Indonesians and the people around the world as well.”

Ripples of excitement and emotion spread among the people present on the occasion. But Kim Il Sung declined the request.

Sukarno asked repeatedly, saying, “You’ve performed a great deal of exploits for humanity. It is a desire of mankind to call this flower after your name. From this moment on we’ll call the flower Kimilsungia.”

A roar of applause burst out, along with the chant of “Kimilsungia!”

This happened on the morning of April 13, 1965.

## **Refusal to Join the CMEA**

Soon after the Korean people set out for the postwar rehabilitation with their belts tightened, Khrushchev, the then first secretary of the Communist Party of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, came up with the idea of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s joining of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (CMEA). He eulogized his idea as a “beneficial plan for the interest and prosperity of a poor nation.” By suggesting the “silk bag of benefits” he intended to draw the DPRK, a strongly anti-imperialist, counter-revisionist nation with a staunch spirit of independence, into the CMEA and “grab

the free wheel” of the socialist camp. And yet he knew well that Kim Il Sung, leader of the DPRK, was commanding high respect and prestige in the international arena, so he avoided coming straight to the matter of the country’s joining of the CMEA. He went to great pains to work out a scheme to draw the country into the CMEA.

Kim Il Sung dropped in Moscow in June 1956 on his way to Eastern Europe for a visit to fraternal countries. On the occasion Mikoyan, first deputy chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers, put forward the question of Korea’s joining of the CMEA. While talking of the country’s economic situation in the postwar years, he made a point of explaining about the possible advantages from the proposed admission.

The Korean leader declined his “offer” decently.

Having failed to attain his aim using Mikoyan, Khrushchev now mobilized the then East Germany, the then Czechoslovakia, and other member nations of the CMEA, but in vain again.

This time Khrushchev played the tune of “benefits from the joining of the CMEA” himself when he met Kim Il Sung who dropped in Moscow on his way back home from his visit to East European socialist countries.

The Korean leader made a logical argument against his sophistic theory of “international specialization” and “comradely mutual assistance.” He said to the following effect: We are not opposed to the socialist countries’ international specialization as members of the CMEA. We also deem it

understandable for some nations with developed industries to ask for mutual help, cooperativization and specialization among the socialist countries as they are short of materials and markets. But we're in a different position. As you know, our industry is not so developed yet as to take charge of a certain field and mass-produce and supply machines to other countries. It is the same case with agriculture. Since we haven't even filled the bomb craters yet or carried out irrigation projects, we cannot produce enough food for our own demand yet. Such being the situation, we can hardly take charge of agriculture either, you know, for the CMEA. At the moment we depend on the import from the Soviet Union and China for rice, and, obviously, we cannot assume the job of rice production for the international organization. We cannot manage the fruit production, either. How could you and we be in the same class when we are in the kindergarten level while you are in the college one? I'd like to hear your answer. We'd better exploit iron ores by ourselves, produce molten iron, make water pumps, and grow crops for our own food. Then we would not be in a position to beg you for this or that, and this would relieve you of the trouble. Moreover, it could be interpreted as our international aid to you, wouldn't it? It's advisable for you not to urge us to join the CMEA as we are incapable of it. What about considering your suggestion after we've reached a proper level by building an independent national economy?

Kim Il Sung's words flowed gently and decently, but they

were so logical that Khrushchev found himself unable to make any further argument.

But refusing to give up his intention to include Korea in the Soviet-leading international organization, Khrushchev kept pursuing his scheme stubbornly, leaving no stone unturned, despite his repeated failures. Now he decided to make his last-ditch attempt.

In January 1963 he sent Andropov, the then secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to Pyongyang on a special mission.

When he was received by Kim Il Sung, he said that Khrushchev had entrusted him with the matter of explaining about the stand of the Soviet party towards the problem of “international specialization” among the socialist nations. Then he mouthed a lengthy argument, saying, “It’s up to individual nations’ voluntary will to join the international specialization and cooperativization or not. It was not the Soviet Union but Hungary, Czechoslovakia and other small nations that proposed the international specialization. If you think international specialization and cooperativization advantageous, you can join it, but if not, you are allowed to remain outside the programme. There was established a principle in 1956 that even when engaged in international specialization the members should be allowed to develop the sector which is beneficial to them. If this principle is interpreted mechanically, I’m afraid, you might think the Soviet Union, Democratic Germany, Czechoslovakia

and some other countries are to develop industries alone while the others are to be engaged in agriculture alone. That's far from the idea of the Soviet party."

Khrushchev's stand advocated by Andropov was rather flexible. But in such a gentle advice, Kim Il Sung instantly noticed Khrushchev's underhand scheme to get his aim which he had failed to attain in a coercive and oppressive manner. Now he began to express himself. He said, "**When your party puts forward a good opinion we support it and go the same way as yours; when you advance a viewpoint unfavourable to us, we avoid it and go our own way. Of course, when we assert the need to build an independent national economy, it doesn't mean we don't need the help from the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. We've so far made the most of the aid from the socialist countries in hastening socialist construction, and, as a result, we are now able to stand on our own feet. We believe that we should give precedence to the exertion of our own effort in any work rather than to the aid from other countries. Only then, will we be able to clear our people of the idea of depending on others' assistance alone and equip them with the spirit of self-reliance. Some people in foreign countries don't understand this principle and think that we are going to build our economy by ourselves. When we say we're going to build an independent national economy, we don't mean we are opposed to international specialization.**"

Kim Il Sung paused for a while, and then resumed. “**At the moment some junior officials of your country make mysterious remarks to us. Of course, we are not to think it to be your party’s policy, but they say to the effect that our party must do just the way the Soviet party does and that we are not allowed to go any different way. That’s going against the grains of us. Frankly speaking, the members of the Soviet embassy in my country seem to have not so good a head. They think that when they start with ‘A’ we must follow it up with ‘B’ but not with ‘T’. I heard that a Soviet correspondent spoke ill of a slogan that called for building an independent national economy when he saw it on a visit to a factory in our country. He went so far as to say, ‘Try and do it.’ Is that good manners?”**

Andropov said, “It’s wrong when the Soviet correspondent spoke ill of the slogan of the Korean party for the building of an independent national economy; it’s an insult to the Korean people. I apologize for it.”

Kim Il Sung, wearing a generous smile, said, “**Building an independent national economy belongs in no way to nationalism but to internationalism. As I said to Khrushchev earlier, we would not have to import grains from the Soviet Union when we’ve built an independent national economy and have a rich harvest. This might be internationalist aid to the Soviet Union on our part. Self-reliance means standing on your own feet. What’s**

**wrong with our self-reliant stand? Nothing's wrong.”**

The Soviet party secretary nodded, saying, “We'll be glad if all our fraternal nations develop their own economy with their own efforts like the Koreans do. Who but a fool would feel unpleasant about the building of a self-sufficient national economy? I appreciate the Korean party's pursuance of building an independent national economy. I think I've got a full understanding of the Korean party's policy.”

On returning to Moscow Andropov conveyed Kim Il Sung's statements to Khrushchev as they were. The long-standing controversy over the question of entry into the CMEA came to an end now.

### **The Secret Carter Knew in Korea**

Jimmy Carter, 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in mid-June 1994 to meet Kim Il Sung, President of the DPRK. Making an acquaintance with the DPRK leader, Carter found himself attracted to his great personality. Referring to his impression, he said that President Kim Il Sung was greater than the Three Presidents of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln altogether who were representative of the establishment and fortune of the United States. This statement is well known across the world. There is a story, however, still unknown.

On June 17, 1994, Kim Il Sung, together with Carter, left for

the West Sea Barrage aboard a sightseeing boat. When the luncheon began on the boat, he kindly asked Carter to help himself as he had made sure that special dishes were prepared to tempt his palate. Looking at the dishes on the table, Carter was surprised. His eyes turned to Kim Il Sung.

The Korean leader, wearing a kind-hearted smile, said that he had arranged a special meal for him taking into consideration the fact that he was allergic to soy beans.

Carter became wide-eyed. He asked how he knew his private “secret.”

Laughing pleasantly, Kim Il Sung said he was ignorant of nothing in the world.

Carter beamed with a pleasant smile, pleased that Kim Il Sung knew his “secret.” “I know a secret about you, too,” he said, assuming a serious face. It was another surprising moment.

Kim Il Sung asked Carter, casting a glance of interest, “**What’s the ‘secret’?**”

Carter pulled his chair up to the table and said, “I know you made sure that a lot of rainbow trout spawn were hatched and let out into the rivers to multiply the fish when some people were dubious about it. Now the fish have multiplied around your country and people can have it.”

“**Is that what you call ‘secret’?**” Kim Il Sung said, laughing heartily. Carter laughed, too.

Kim Il Sung gave a detailed account of how the rainbow

trout came to Korea and multiplied all across the country.

Carter listened to him attentively.

Now the boat was near Nampho Port. Carter looked at the port with interest. Presently he caught a sight of two far-off silos which were not so large. He was overwhelmed with curiosity. He addressed Kim Il Sung, "You say you're ignorant of nothing in the world. Could you tell me what is there in those silos, please?"

Kim Il Sung smiled at him. Then he gave an explanation good enough for the American to understand what was in the silos.

Carter was struck with admiration for the explanation. After a moment of emotional silence he marvelled, "It's really surprising. There are many heads of state in the world, but I don't think any one else could tell what's in a small silo. You're really ignorant of nothing in the world."

He whispered to his wife in the next chair, "I've learned another 'secret' about President Kim Il Sung. I'm sure he is a great man."

"I agree," Rosaline said and looked up at Kim Il Sung reverentially.

### **Kanemaru's Last Mission**

An airliner landed smoothly in Narita Airport, Tokyo on the evening of September 28, 1990. The door of the plane opened,

and a man in his 70s appeared and walked down the steps in a dignified gait.

“There he is,” someone cried, and a group of people who had been waiting in front of the airport building began to rush to him as if in a race. The old man was surrounded by the crowd in a second. There were cameras and mikes all around. Reporters showered questions: “What’s your impression of Pyongyang like?” “How are you feeling now?” “Is it true you shed tears in the presence of President Kim Il Sung?”

The man, looking around the boisterous reporters slowly, opened his mouth. “It was an excellent visit. One thing I’m sorry about is that I was there belatedly. Did I shed tears? It’s true. When I met President Kim Il Sung, I shed tears. I don’t want to hide it because it’s not a shame to be attracted to a man who is truly respectable. I’m in the twilight of my life, but I’m going to do the best to live up to the trust of President Kim Il Sung. This is my last mission as a statesman.”

He gestured a goodbye with his eyes and got on his car.

That was Kanemaru Shin, a political giant of Japan, who announced the change in his life’s pursuance after meeting Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, as the first of the Japanese to travel to the DPRK by air without any transit of a third country.

His Pyongyang visit was more than astonishing to the Western world, to say nothing of the Japanese. The Westerners could hardly understand how the elderly man who had followed

the pro-US, anti-communist line all his life could change his pursuance after a single visit to Pyongyang.

The rightwing forces of Japan, in particular, were shocked, because Kanemaru was an overwhelming weight to the Japanese political circles. Consecutively assuming the offices of minister of construction, director of the defense agency, chief secretary of the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), and deputy premier in the Nakasone Cabinet, he distinguished himself as hawk, advocate for the claims for arms buildup and amendment of the Constitution. As advisor to the LDP, he was the mastermind behind the formation of the Takeshita and Kaifu cabinets. He was the man of top power behind the curtain who gave the political verdict whenever the Japanese administration fell into a crisis.

The rightist reactionaries resorted to whatever they could—even dirty tricks—to turn Kanemaru around who was looking to Pyongyang. They released backbiting articles in the rightist journals *Shukan Bunshun* and *Shukan Jiji* and ran about Kanemaru's office and house on loudspeaker vans making all sorts of slanders and insulting propaganda to smear his political reputation. They went so far as to mobilize thugs to send crank letters and make threatening telephone calls.

One day some gunmen in masks intruded Kanemaru's office. The unidentified men produced a pistol and pointed it to his breast, forcing him to promise that he would stop all activities in favour of Pyongyang while announcing the annulment of the

joint declaration adopted by the Workers' Party of Korea and Japan's Liberal-Democratic Party and Socialist Party. Kanemaru found himself at the crossroad of life and death. Now he did not hesitate to face the gun muzzle. It meant he was ready to lay down his life. He declared, "I'm already determined to live up to Kim Il Sung to the end of my life even if I die at any moment from any hooligans' stabbing or shooting. You know how persistent I'm. Once I make up my mind, that's all. You can't bend my principle even if you threaten me with a gun, not a pistol. I treasure faith than my own life. Now you can do anything about me."

Overawed by his undaunted manners, the masked men took to flight. The more ferocious the rightist reactionaries became, the higher-spirited he became while making desperate efforts to implement the joint declaration of the three parties. Taking advantage of his influence he urged the prime minister and the foreign minister to accelerate the inter-governmental negotiation for normalization of the state relations between Japan and the DPRK. He made sure that the League of MPs for the Promotion of Japan-DPRK Friendship—with which he had never concerned himself—was mostly reshuffled with high-ranking figures of the political circle while he himself assuming the position of the supervisor. He sent an LDP delegation led by the party's chief secretary to Pyongyang to attend the celebrations of the 48<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea, as he had promised to President

Kim Il Sung. In the course of working devotedly to keep his friendly ties with the DPRK leader, he earned the nickname of Kanemaru Kim.

A Workers' Party of Korea delegation paid a visit to Japan in February 1991. Meeting the delegation Kanemaru said, "I'd like you to believe that I hold President Kim Il Sung in high esteem as a great statesman and that I will continue to stand by the Korean side. I say I'll dedicate my life to President Kim Il Sung, because I know that's the way to global peace. I know how to keep my word. If I betrayed my oath to President Kim Il Sung, I'd be as good as dead. Now I think there's nothing else for me to do than working for President Kim Il Sung. That's the last task of mine. I know I'm such a kind of person who moves forward alone without retreating—like a chariot. I'll go the same way as President Kim Il Sung to the end."

Kanemaru remained true to his words until he passed on March 28, 1996 at the age of 81.

### **Che Guevara's Motto**

Che Guevara, an indomitable internationalist produced by the Latin American people, was born the eldest son of an architect's family in Argentina in 1928. On completing his medical studies, he joined the revolutionary struggle in Guatemala, Cuba, Mexico and other countries.

Guevara met Fidel Castro in Mexico in 1955. He then joined the July 26 campaign that was named after the attack on the Moncada Barracks on that day. Landing in Cuba along with Fidel-led guerrillas aboard the *Granma* in November 1956, he rendered a great service for the victorious Cuban revolution as commander of the central front. After the Cuban revolution emerged victorious on January 1, 1959 he worked as president of the National Bank of Cuba through the mission of commander of the Havana garrison.

Guevara visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in December 1960 when he was working at the National Bank of Cuba.

Kim Il Sung, who had been paying close attention to the Cuban revolution, received Guevara and his party on December 2. Taking him by the hand warmly, Kim Il Sung said, **“Although our two countries are wide apart, we are fighting together against the common enemy.”**

Then, warmly welcoming the Cuban delegation, he said that his people's heart went out to the Cuban guests. He asked if there was any inconvenience in their stay.

Guevara conveyed Fidel's warm greetings to the Korean leader, and frankly spoke of the difficulties the Cubans were undergoing after the victory of the revolution. He added that his delegation wanted to learn the achievements and experience of the Korean people and that they were sincerely hoping to have a lot of advices from the leader of the DPRK.

Understanding Guevara's desire, Kim Il Sung gave hours of delineation in easy words about his country's achievements in socialist construction, free medical care system and experience in the effort to improve the people's living standards. Concluding his talk, he said in a convincing voice, "**We're going to offer positive cooperation to you.**"

Guevara answered in an emotional tone, "Your words are a tremendous encouragement to us when we're in difficulties. I'd like to offer you heartfelt thanks on behalf of the Cuban people."

That evening Kim Il Sung gave a banquet in honour of Guevara and his delegation. When the party was proceeding in an amicable atmosphere, Guevara, who was quite relaxed, asked Kim Il Sung if he could ask a question. The Korean leader responded readily with a bright smile, saying, "**We're comrades in the same trench. You can ask anything.**"

Guevara said, "I've long held you in respect from the bottom of my heart. You joined in the revolutionary struggle when you were young, and defeated the Japanese and US imperialists. Now that I'm on a visit to your country, I have got higher respect for you."

**"Thanks,"** Kim Il Sung responded.

Guevara resumed in a rather serious voice, straightening himself up, "I'm quite impressed to hear you say you will give positive assistance to the Cuban people when you're still having a hard time. To tell the truth, I've toured many countries, and

none of them have offered to help us with sincerity. But you've confirmed that you'll give us sincere assistance. I appreciate your statement again. And yet I'm afraid you might incur economic difficulties when you try to assist us in the Cuban revolution. Then we shall be very sorry."

Kim Il Sung gave an understanding glance to Guevara. He seemed to have read Guevara's mind in his bright, intelligent eyes, the honest mind that sympathizes with others for their situation rather than seeking his own interest. After a while, he said in a low but important tone, **"It's true we're still in need. But we'll help you defend the Cuban revolution that emerged victorious for the first time in Latin America, even if that means we have to tighten our belt. That is a sacred duty of us communists working for proletarian internationalism. Genuine communists are just true proletarian internationalists. We don't think the Cuban revolution is nothing to do with us. We in the eastern hemisphere and you in the western hemisphere will have to join hands to wipe off the imperialists for good."**

Guevara stood up in excitement. Then he pronounced articulately, "I'm completely gripped by your words. Your statement that genuine communists are just true proletarian internationalists is a guiding principle for the revolutionaries in their life and struggle against the imperialists. From now on I'll keep it as my motto for ever. And I swear I'll be loyal to it to the end."

Kim Il Sung warmly took Guevara by the hand, saying he believed in his words. “**Let’s fight it out for the sake of the revolution,**” he appealed sincerely.

After his visit to Korea Guevara, as minister of industries, engrossed himself in the struggle to shatter the Americans’ economic blockade. Despite unutterable difficulties, the economic construction made a remarkable progress and the people’s living standards improved considerably.

Guevara, however, was feeling oppressive; he was sore about the plight of the people in the neighbouring countries who were groaning under the oppression of the imperialists.

One day he said to Fidel and other close comrades of his, “Genuine communists are just true proletarian internationalists. This is a revolutionary principle Kim Il Sung implanted in my mind. I’ve decided to dedicate myself to proletarian internationalism.”

And he meant it. He waged guerrilla warfare in Bolivia for over two years before he was arrested on October 8, 1967, betrayed by a turncoat. The enemy murdered him without any trial as soon as they took him. He died a life of 38 years.

He was an internationalist who fought to the end of his life keeping proletarian internationalism as his motto of life and struggle.

## **2. Great Leader**

### **Father Party and Child Party**

In late May 1975 President Kim Il Sung was staying in Romania on his long journey of friendship visit to East European socialist nations. At the time Grelichkov, member of the Executive Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and head of the department of international affairs of the party, came to Romania to see the DPRK leader in the capacity of Tito's special envoy. He conveyed Tito's invitation for Kim Il Sung to drop in Yugoslavia on his way of East European tour. Accepting the invitation Kim Il Sung set out on a visit to Yugoslavia, which had not been scheduled in the programme of his East European visit.

Tito was so pleased that he accompanied Kim Il Sung on his trip all the way although he was in bad condition, according him with hospitable reception with all his sincerity.

In their conversation on June 7 Tito said that the DPRK was moving ahead confidently without caring about another's smile or frown, and added that his country was harassed by this or that pressure and slander from abroad over their building of autonomous socialism against the supremacist doctrine.

Studying Tito's worried face, Kim Il Sung said, “**Each party should equip its members with its idea and policies. It is undesirable to follow other parties' policies blindly.**”

“It's not an easy job, though,” Tito said, and added that his party had been subservient to the Soviet party, accepting their claim that it was against the principle to go against the proletarian internationalism.

“**Each nation's party,**” Kim Il Sung said with a slight nod, “**can be loyal to proletarian internationalism only when it carries on its own revolution successfully. Making your own revolution successfully isn't contradictory to proletarian internationalism.**”

“That's right,” Tito agreed. “But the Soviet Union has put pressure on us and made us estranged on the ground that we refuse to go their way. They denied our idea of creating a Non-Aligned Movement for a long time. We've suffered a lot from the pressure both from the Soviet Union and the imperialists.”

Kim Il Sung said that he understood their troubles very well, and went on, “**We claim that a man's flunkeyism will make him a fool, that a nation's flunkeyism will bring it to ruin and that a party's flunkeyism will play havoc with the revolution and construction.**”

“That's quite right,” Tito said. “Your country has made a great progress since the Workers' Party of Korea has adhered to the principle of independence.”

Kim Il Sung said, “We value independence as much as our own lives. Some nations’ parties like to order other parties to do this or that, regarding themselves as the centre of the international communist movement. This is violation of the independent right. Now that the communists in all countries have got long-standing experience in their struggles the centre of the international communist movement is no longer needed... The subjective line of establishing the centre of the international communist movement and letting it supervise the revolution in other countries is infeasible... We disagree to the idea of setting up such a centre and making national parties subservient to the policies of a certain nation’s party.”

After a pause Kim Il Sung said emphatically, “**There can be neither senior and junior parties, nor father party and child party in the world.**”

Tito nodded, mumbling, “Father party and child party.” Then, he said, “That’s a good definition of each national party’s position. I fully agree to your opinion.”

Kim Il Sung stressed, “**The time demands independence now.**”

Tito responded, “I’ve learned valuable truth today. My party shall adhere to independence firmly. We won’t be a child party in any case.”

Later Tito staunchly rebuffed the chauvinists’ attempt to make interference in his nation’s internal affairs, saying, “We aren’t a child party, and you aren’t a father party.”

## **Government's Reliance**

On February 23, 1972 Kim Il Sung received Jose, general secretary of the national leadership of the Alliance for Popular Unity of Chile who was on a visit to Pyongyang.

On the occasion Jose conveyed President Allende's warm greetings to Kim Il Sung, saying that the President cherished the memory of his visit to the DPRK when he had met Kim Il Sung and received important advice. Then, on behalf of the President, Jose spoke of the specific details of the Chilean situation.

Allende had formed the Alliance for Popular Unity, a united front of leftist parties, with his Socialist Party as the parent body, hoping to set up a new, people-centric society in Chile that used to be called a "calm backyard of the US." By campaigning for the presidency successfully, he won the election on September 4, 1970, defeating the candidate representing the rightist bloc. That was a political mega event in the history of Chile.

As soon as he took power, Allende carried out an agrarian reform whereby he distributed 3.5 million hectares of land—that had been in the possession of the landlords—to peasants and abolished the plantation system. He also nationalized a gigantic copper mine, backbone factories, mines, banks and communications that had been under the control of US monopoly. He declared a 200 nautical miles of the nation's territorial waters and, in particular, made a bold political

decision of quitting from the UN Commission on Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea which was under the control of the US. These radical measures of the Allende government received support from broad masses of the people.

Alarmed at the developments, the Americans began to plot the overthrow of the Allende government, fearing the appearance of another Cuba in Latin America. The French newspaper *Monde* once issued a surprising article which read in part, “President Nixon was infuriated to hear the Marxist Allende had been elected for presidency. He called in the ambassador to Chile, and shouted to him—his fist banging the table—to get rid of the bad guy (Allende) at once. He ordered to give US\$ 10 million at once for a special fund and bring weapons including machine guns worth US\$ 50 million to Chile in secrecy by means of ‘diplomatic pack.’ This confidential scheme was called ‘Condor.’” This is a simple instance of the desperate efforts of the Americans to overthrow the Allende government. In this way Chile was in an extremely acute situation of showdown between the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces.

Hearing out Jose’s account, Kim Il Sung lapsed into deep thought. After a while he asked, “**Have you got an army?**”

Jose was at a loss what to say.

Kim Il Sung asked again if the government got the control of the military.

Now Jose replied proudly that his national army was

characteristically fostering a favourable environment for the maintenance of the government and that Allende had succeeded in making the armed force neutral by means of the Constitution.

Kim Il Sung nodded slowly, before asking in a serious way whether the neutral army was ready to stand by the legitimate government in any case.

Jose fell silent again.

Kim Il Sung asked in a low but serious voice, “**We don’t think Allende has got a full grip on the power although he is the President.**”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Jose.

Kim Il Sung articulated, “**If you want to get a grip on the power, you must have the control of the military and police. The government is defended by the army and police. Winning the power does not mean easy solution of all problems immediately... You can hardly say you have got the full control of the power unless you have got a complete control of the military and police.**” He went ahead earnestly, “**It is true that Allende has become President by forming a united front and implementing the ‘strategy of peaceful transition.’ The ‘strategy of peaceful transition,’ however, is the one of importance in the effort to snatch the power. Once you have got the power, you have to take hold of the military and police first of all in order to bolster the power. The power depends on the gun. So, you have to take control of the army and police ahead of all things if you want to grip the power completely.**”

Jose realized they were making a serious mistake in their administration.

Nevertheless, Allende engrossed himself in social and economic reform alone even after Jose returned. Without pushing the effort to take a tight grip of the army, he was satisfied with keeping in contact with some of the military units.

Meanwhile, pressed by the reactionary forces in collusion with the US, the government adopted a law on control of weapons and confiscated all the weapons from the affiliates of all the parties aligned with the Alliance for Popular Unity. This meant a complete disarmament of the Allende government, and an impending doom of the bare-handed Allende camp in the showdown between the revolution and the counterrevolution.

The day came on September 11, 1973, when the US, regarding the Chilean revolution as a thorn in the flesh, instigated the pro-American army commander Pinochet to raise a coup d'etat and overthrow the Allende government.

Allende took an automatic rifle in the hand and fought until he died a heroic death.

## **A Revolutionary Formula**

Allan Garcia, general secretary of the National Secretariat of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance of Peru, visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in June 1983. He wanted to solicit opinions of DPRK President Kim Il Sung

regarding how to manage the administration of the country now that it was almost certain that he would succeed in the imminent presidential election.

Peru is large in territorial area and abundant in underground resources and has favourable physiographical conditions. But as the successive rulers had followed the US subserviently the Peruvians were numb with the consciousness of national independence and the national economy was almost gutted by the foreign capitals. What was deplorable in particular was that although it was the origin of the maize and potato crops and had great advantages in farming, the nation had to import a huge amount of grains from abroad year after year as the economy was subordinate to foreign countries.

Kim Il Sung met Garcia as many as six times in three days, giving advice on how to rid themselves of the American shackles and head for independence.

At the talks on July 1, Kim Il Sung spoke of the need to adhere to the independent stand in the revolution and construction, how he created the Juche idea, the principles to be maintained consistently in the building of a new society, matters related to global independence and other issues. He said it is undesirable to swallow foreign things as they are, however good they might be, without taking the specific local condition into consideration. **“Of course, it is necessary to learn from others. And yet you should take it only when your stomach accepts it. You have to spit it out if your stomach rejects it.”**

Listening to the crack euphemism, Garcia excitedly said, “That’s quite a meaningful maxim. You can make it because you have already brought the ideal of mankind into reality. No one else could produce it.” And he avowed that he would keep the maxim in mind and build a new society in Peru by applying the Juche idea.

Encouraging him heartily, Kim Il Sung said, “**Communists in every country should use their own head to find the way of making their revolution in the interest of their nation and in compliance with the condition of their country... There can be no immutable formulas in making revolution. There are formulas in mathematics, but not in the revolution. If there is any in the revolution to be observed without fail, that's that you have to consider all matters with your brain and treat them with your resources. There are no other formulas. We have drawn this conclusion in our protracted revolutionary struggle.**”

“I’ll keep it in mind,” Garcia said, “I’ll do everything to suit the condition of Peru true to the revolutionary formula. You’re a great leader I’ve ever met. We’ll hold you in high esteem as mentor of our party and learn your thinking.”

He uttered the words for no formality’s sake. He paid another visit to the DPRK in July 1984 to see Kim Il Sung. Later, by campaigning as had been advised by the Korean leader, he won the presidential election. As President he made efforts to satisfy the independent desire and demand of the Peruvians upholding the slogan “Do everything in the

Peruvian way to suit the Peruvian condition!”

## **I've Nothing to Do With Pessimism**

In December 1992 President Kim Il Sung had talks with the Malian President Conare before his return home after his Korea visit, and gave a luncheon in honour of him. On the occasion Conare cautiously spoke of his worries about whether the DPRK could survive the challenge from the allied imperialist forces single-handedly when the East European socialist nations including the former Soviet Union had gone bankrupt.

Wearing a light smile, Kim Il Sung said, “**We have a proverb in our country, which goes, ‘There’s always a hole to escape through even when the heaven falls.’ That means hope is the last thing that we lose. While leading the revolution and construction I’ve never lost heart in whatever the difficulties and dangers might be.**” Then, he continued to say, “**During the Fatherland Liberation War when we fought against the Americans, I didn’t sleep in the air-raid shelter at all. At night I travelled many places including the front by car with the headlights on, but I was all right. I fought against the Japanese aggressors for nearly 20 years. On one occasion a bullet went through my knapsack, but I was far from wounded. So they called me Person from the Heaven. I’m afraid of nothing.**”

After a while, he resumed his account, the smile receding from his face, “**My country is in a difficult situation now, of**

**course. The Americans are attempting to isolate my country. They are making all kinds of plots to remove the socialism of our style. But I'm not afraid of their moves.”**

**Kim Il Sung said emphatically, “You need not worry about us. We've got food, clothes, houses and armed forces. We're ready to fight the Americans once they intrude our country. They must have learned a bitter lesson from the war they fought with us for three years. They dare not touch us.”**

Now Conare said in earnest, “I was attending college when you, great leader, were fighting a war against the Americans. To tell the truth, we students were worried the small Korea would hardly win the mammoth enemy of the US. But the Korean people defeated the Americans who were bragging they had the mightiest forces in the world. We have since held you in high esteem as a legendary hero and an iron-willed commander.”

**Kim Il Sung appreciated his remarks. Then he said, “The US imperialists are now menacing us, but I'm not frightened. My philosophy is that there's always a hole to escape through even when the heaven falls. I've nothing to do with pessimism.”**

Conare said in admiration, “As you have such a great conviction, your country is impregnable.”

### **Brothers After All**

After he took the position of the head of the Soviet Communist Party Khrushchev forced the parties of the socialist

countries to follow his revisionist policy. If the parties did not accept his policy, he stigmatized them as this or that while bringing pressure on them. He went so far as to divide the socialist nations into this side and that by the standard of whether they followed his policy or not. He unhesitatingly called international conferences in an attempt to reject the disobedient nations organizationally. This was a serious violation of the rules of mutual relationship on complete equality, independence, mutual respect, non-interference in internal affairs and comradely cooperation between brother parties and nations. (The rules were adopted by communist and workers' parties from different countries at the November 1957 and November 1960 conferences.) Consequently, the disagreement among socialist parties and nations spilled over the ideo-theoretical realm to relations between parties and states, harming the socialist camp to a great extent.

Kim Il Sung met Andropov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, on a visit to the DPRK on January 23, 1963. On the occasion he criticized the chauvinist and revisionist policies of the Soviet party. He pointed out that the Soviet party was putting pressure on brother parties or giving this label or that to them openly instead of seeking to solve dissensions between brother parties through internal negotiation. He asked Andropov what kind of image one would earn if he called his brother "son of bitch."

The answer was simple and clear, but the question carried too

deep and sharp senses to be simply answered in a word. Looking across at Andropov, Kim Il Sung said firmly, “**However serious one’s mistake is, we are not to call him ‘son of bitch’ because we are brothers and have to reunite after all. If you call your brother ‘son of bitch,’ you’ll earn the same insult for yourself. To divide the brother parties into this and that is the way of thinking peculiar to those who pursue international factionalism.**”

“You’re absolutely right,” Andropov agreed. “On my return home I’ll give strong advice to my leadership to stop such a practice.”

Kim Il Sung’s humorous yet incisive words found their way into Andropov’s mind so poignantly that the Soviet official remembered them vividly one day in 1982, nearly 20 years later, when he said, “I was in Pyongyang when the Soviet-Korea relations were as bad as ever. When I met Kim Il Sung, he made analysis of some parties’ problems. This analysis has turned out correct now. I appreciate it, and I respect the DPRK leader.”

### **Source of Ever-victorousness**

Campos, general secretary of the October 8 Revolutionary Movement of Brazil, and his entourage came to visit Pyongyang in early April 1993 when the party was vacillating from the shock of the setback of socialism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Kim Il Sung received Campos and his party on April 5. On the occasion Campos told in detail about the condition of his October 8 Revolutionary Movement.

Hearing him out, Kim Il Sung appreciated the fact that the socialist idea remained alive in Latin America even after the socialist system collapsed in the former Soviet Union and East European countries. He went on to say that the communist movement was straightening itself out in different aspects, that it was budding in Russia, that communist parties were coming into existence again, and that other parties in Latin America and Asia were also making preparations for forward march after a breathing space.

Hearing the words, Campos frankly spoke that although his organization was fighting to build socialism in Brazil without giving up the socialist idea, the prospect of their victory was quite gloomy for certain difficult problems.

Kim Il Sung looked round his guests for a while, understanding their agonies over their fight for socialism encircled by the imperialists. Then, he stated, **“If you want to make revolution, you have to keep a conviction in the victory—that’s important. You can win for sure when you fight with a conviction in victory and optimism about it, however difficult your condition may be. The conclusion I’ve got from my struggle up to date is that we can always win as long as we trust the people and rely on their exertions and fight along with them, and that we could**

**never win if we were divorced from them. If you want to make revolution, you have to go among the people. We revolutionaries should always go among the people and learn from them while teaching them. As I share sweets and bitters with the people, I'm free from failure in my work. I've never failed to attain my aim. Share sweets and bitters with the people, and you'll never fail in any struggle."**

The President's forceful voice went on, "**You should associate yourself with the people more closely when you are faced with ordeals and difficulties. When you're among the people there'll be no problems insurmountable for you. When you trust the people and rely on their efforts, you'll be able to establish in Brazil a new society whose master is the very people.**"

Campos told Kim Il Sung confidently, "Now I'm sure I've got a bright view. I've got the source of ever-victoriusness in your country."

### **Though Small, the Pepper Is Very Hot**

Alvaro Cunhal, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party, was on a visit to the DPRK in early July 1991.

President Kim Il Sung met him on the 7<sup>th</sup> and the following day, when he spent long hours talking of the causes of the setback of socialism in East European countries. In particular, he seriously referred to the fact that the countries had neglected the work of

ideological education whereby to train the popular masses ideologically sound in the face of the counterrevolutionary moves of the imperialists, and that as a result they had failed to defend socialism to the end. He recalled that when socialist countries were mushrooming up in Eastern Europe Truman who was the president of the US at the time argued that socialism would ruin in the second and third generations. The first generation in Eastern Europe was represented by Wilhelm Pieck and Ulbricht of Germany, Gottwald of Czechoslovakia, Bierut of Poland, Dej of Romania, and Dimitrov of Bulgaria, he remarked. At the time Truman asserted that the first-generation people in the East European countries were all long-standing communists, that socialism could not be defeated while they were alive, and that it might disintegrate in the second and third generations after they died. **“The US Central Intelligence Agency has since carried on disruption operations against the East European nations,”** declared Kim Il Sung.

In retrospect, socialism that appeared in Eastern Europe with the end of the Second World War was the beacon of hope of the progressive peoples who love justice and peace. But the US resorted to every conceivable means to break up socialism, regarding it as an offense to the eye. The most experienced Western schemers engaged in the anti-communist campaign had a back-street conference in Munich to make up the so-called “Harvard Programme.” It was followed by the formation of more than 400 “centres for scientific studies of communism” in the

United States, West Germany, Britain, France and other countries. They hatched all sorts of anti-socialist plots. In 1950 the Radio Freedom and the Radio Free Europe were opened to rush to carry on a psychological warfare against the socialist nations.

Now Kim Il Sung declared that the incidents in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia which had left a serious lesson in the history of the communist movement were all products of the anti-socialist strategy of the US imperialists. He said ruefully, “**The leaders of the East European countries should have learned a serious lesson from the incidents and made arrangements for revolutionary education of the people. But they didn’t do anything but sat with folded arms. Worse still, they, giving themselves up to the imperialists’ anti-socialist ideological campaign, endorsed the ‘ideological liberty’ and finally came to see the downfall of their parties and socialism.”**

The President continued to say, “**You can win the fierce confrontation with the imperialists when you adhere to your ideology, but not if you give it up. This is a bloody lesson left by the international communist movement.”**

He thought for a while and said, “**My country is small but strong. Though small, the pepper is very hot. The Americans want to munch us, but dare not do so because we are hot.”**

He then reiterated, “**Even a small country will be as hot as the pepper when it is ideologically perfect and sound. It’ll then be undaunted over any imperialist challenges. My country is small but as hot as the pepper.”**

“That’s a significant remark,” Cunhal said. “As an ideological power, your country is hotter than the pepper. I dare say no other country in the world is as strong as to touch yours.”

## **Song of the Red Flag**

On October 5, 1990 President Kim Il Sung received Jack Byrnes, head of the American Socialist Workers Party, who was on a visit to the DPRK to attend the celebrations of the 45<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary of the Workers’ Party of Korea.

On the occasion Byrnes said he thought it a great honour for him to meet Kim Il Sung who was a veteran of the world revolution. Then he asked for his comment on the developments in Eastern Europe.

Kim Il Sung said that although the imperialists were launching a vicious offensive against socialism in their warfare with no gun reports according to their “strategy of peaceful transition,” there was no need to worry about. He stated, “**Since we set out in the revolutionary struggle against the Japanese aggressors, we’ve got our favourite song *Song of the Red Flag*. A line of it goes, ‘Let the cowards go their way, we’ll keep to the red flag.’** Like the words, we, revolutionary people, will get united and push ahead with the revolution to the end when the cowards run away.”

Byrnes agreed that *Song of the Red Flag* was rather the revolutionaries’ chant of faith and paean to their struggle than a

simple lyric.

Kim Il Sung said confidently, “**We’ll keep upholding the red flag steadfastly in Asia.**” Then he expressed his expectation that the American Socialist Workers Party would continue to adhere to the revolutionary principle under the red flag of revolution.

## **Road to Downfall**

On April 14, 1992 Kim Il Sung met Museveni, chairman of the National Resistance Movement of Uganda and President of Uganda, who was on a visit to Pyongyang. The main topic of the conversation was the political situation of Africa which was in turmoil with the multiparty tempest.

By the close of the 1980s Africa had been moving forward dynamically along the independent road with the aspiration to new life since they cast off the colonial yoke. In the early 1990s, however, the continent began to fall into a chaotic situation, swept by the whirlwind of public disorder and confusion, economic demolition, tribal antipathy and conflicts. Zambia, Rwanda, the Congo and Benin lost their long-standing presidents, and their government parties collapsed like a sand wall or degraded to out-parties. Burundi, Liberia and many other countries suffered economic demolition due to tribal conflicts, which drove the people into a wretched state of livelihood. The tragedy in the African continent was the result of the multiparty system introduced blindly to comply with the

imperialist demands. Originally, the multiparty system is a form of polycentrism, an inherent political mode of capitalism along with liberty in ideology and diversity in ownership. In order to disintegrate the African countries from within that were moving forward along the road of independence after they cast off the colonial yoke the imperialists used the economic “aid” to decoy them into the policy of multiparty system. Without looking through the sinister plot, the African nations adopted the “multiparty system,” a camouflaged “democracy,” unable to resist the temptation of “aid.” The countries that introduced the multiparty policy found themselves, without exception, in a deplorable state in which they had to pay dear for it.

Making analysis of such a situation in a number of African countries, Kim Il Sung spoke highly of Museveni’s adherence to the one-party policy without succumbing to the persistent imperialist oppression on the country.

The Ugandan President said that he was opposed to the multiparty system because he was afraid there might crop up many troubles if the system came into existence in his country which was inhabited by several ethnic groups.

Kim Il Sung said, “**The purpose of the imperialists in their tenacious attempt to have the multiparty system introduced is to make the progressive countries turbulent and continue with their colonial domination and subordination of those countries. Although the Soviet Union had carried on the revolution for more than 70**

**years, it went to ruin, with both the Communist Party and the State, because they introduced the multiparty system. The downfall of the East European countries is also ascribable to the introduction of the multiparty system.”**

Then, he articulated, “**African countries have many ethnic groups. So, if you adopt the multiparty system in your country the tribes will form their own parties, and this will give rise to scrambles between the ethnic communities.**”

He went on to say that as there are not any homogeneous nations in Africa and each nation is made up of a large number of ethnic groups, the introduction of the multiparty system would bring about the confrontation among them and finally lead to fights, as was clearly shown by the actual situation of Africa.

Museveni agreed to his opinion.

Kim Il Sung remarked it was taboo to have any illusion about the multiparty system. He stressed, “**I think those who have introduced the multiparty system will turn around only after they have suffered from it. Many of them have already begun to have the sufferings. All will turn around when they have had the bitters for the multiparty system. But it would be too late once they have had the sufferings from the system. By the time the countries would have fallen into the grip of the imperialists.**”

Reiterating the need not to have any illusion about the multiparty system, he concluded, “**The introduction of the**

**multiparty system will lead to nothing but national ruin.”**

## **An Enthusiastic “Student”**

On September 9, 1986 Kim Il Sung received Bruno Kreisky, ex-Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, honorary chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Austria and vice chairman of the Socialist International.

At the meeting Kreisky said, “I’d like to ask you to tell me first. Because I’m going to hear and learn a lot from you.”

Kim Il Sung, wearing a broad smile, said, **“I’d like you not to say you’re going to learn from me. I’d rather say we’re going to share our opinion.”**

Feeling thankful to his modesty, Kreisky told, “Availing myself of this opportunity, I wish to have your opinion on a wide range of matters. I know you’re busy with the celebrations of the founding anniversary of your country, yet I’d be much obliged to have answers for the questions I raised.”

As a matter of fact, Kreisky had sent a questionnaire to President Kim Il Sung via the DPRK mission in Austria. The questions he had asked were wide-ranging, including those about the political situation in the Asia-Pacific, the situation in the Far East, the Non-Aligned Movement, South-South cooperation, North-South relations, Middle Eastern affairs, peace and security issues of the world and other major topics in the international political arena at the moment.

Kim Il Sung gave an answer to each question. After a good while of talking, the DPRK leader proceeded to the topic of establishing a new international economic order, South-South cooperation and North-South relations which Kreisky was quite interested in. He said, “**The most important problem at present is to establish a new international economic order... In the past the non-aligned countries used to meet and do no more than adopting a declaration on setting up a new international economic order. They have had a lot of conferences and made efforts for 25 years, but actually there's no new international economic order in existence yet.**”

“That’s right,” said Kreisky. “I’ve thought about it for a long time, but I’ve found no answer to it yet.”

“**You cannot have South-South cooperation with the efforts of the developing nations alone,**” Kim Il Sung said conclusively.

“Do you mean it’s impossible to establish a new international economic order?” asked Kreisky doubtfully.

Kim Il Sung wore a smile without any words for a minute. Then, looking at Kreisky, he said, “**Of course not. The problem is by what method the South-South cooperation should be done. We deem it feasible to push South-South cooperation by way of joint venture and by enlisting the European nations that sympathize with the developing countries.**”

“European nations join South-South cooperation?” Kreisky exclaimed.

**“Sure,”** Kim Il Sung said confidently.

A happy smile rose on Kreisky’s face. “That’s truly wise of you. That’s the way to solve the problem of South-South cooperation and the unsettled North-South question as well.”

The idea of carrying on South-South cooperation by way of joint venture and by involving the European nations that sympathize with the developing countries was quite the answer to the North-South question that Kreisky had been struggling to solve for dozens of years in the effort to establish a new international economic order.

Earlier he had been on the rush to solve the North-South question, and that had been mostly related to the policy of his Socialist International. Organized as a union of social democratic parties in Western Europe in 1947, the party in its initial years joined in the anti-communist campaign of the imperialists according to its policy of confronting communism, and stood in the way of the national liberation struggle of the colonial, subject nations while maintaining a hostile stand towards the socialist countries. But as many nations emerged independent with the beginning of the 1960s and the left-wing camp got strong within the social democratic parties themselves, the Socialist International amended its policy, putting forth the task of supporting and cooperating with the developing countries. With the election of Brandt as chairman of the party at the 13<sup>th</sup> congress in 1976, the party put up a new programme of establishing a new international economic order and making

the advanced nations cooperate with the Third World. By changing its policy the party intended to do away with the limit of its engagement in European affairs alone, extend its social democratic line to developing countries, and thus spread social democracy all over the world after all. Kreisky was on good terms with Brandt. Availing himself of the relation, Kreisky, who was an inveterate conservative within the party, joined hands with Brandt and asserted that advanced countries including the powers should provide the Third-World nations with some deductions from the expenditures of money on arms race and thus solve the North-South problem and establish a new international economic order. This was a modern version of the theory of peaceful co-existence and class cooperation advocated by the social democrats in their argument for equality for all people and building of a welfare society. But Kreisky failed to accomplish his plan. Although he formed a committee for the studies of development of Africa and went round anxiously appealing to advanced nations for investment and aid to developing countries, he earned no more than the cold-shoulder. Feeling quite disappointed, he decided it a vacant hope to solve the North-South question.

Now meeting President Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang, he got a great pep talk. Describing himself as an enthusiastic student, he told Kim Il Sung thankfully that he had learned a great deal in the “lecture.”

### **3. Outstanding Genius**

#### **Authority on Green Manure Crop Growing**

On May 14, 1983 Kim Il Sung received Joseph Nyerere, brother of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere. As chairman of the management board of the Nyerere Farm, Joseph had been trying to solve the fertilizer problem by growing green manure crops after the experience of Korea in farming.

While talking to Joseph, Kim Il Sung asked if he had grown the species of green manure crop he had taken with him from Korea.

“We sowed the seeds for the first time this year and grew it. Recently we’ve ploughed the land of green manure crops,” replied Joseph.

Hearing the answer the Korean leader said, “**Green manure crops are also edible. You can use them for both fodder and fertilizer. In my country we first grow maize and harvest it before planting green manure crops. When the manure crops grow up, we gather some of them for fodder and then plough the land with the remnant plants to make it fertile. We plant maize the next year in the land.**” The words were to help Joseph have some knowledge of green manure crops.

Kim Il Sung went on to explain, “**Growing green manure**

**crops will help you make two friends with one gift. So, it is a worldwide trend to plant them extensively. You'd better solve the problem of short supply of fertilizer by cultivating green manure crops in your country. Then, you'll be able to save a lot of foreign currency, fertilize the land and also get the fodder for domestic animals.”**

Joseph was so excited that he said it would help make him two or three friends with one gift.

Kim Il Sung said that it is advantageous in many ways to cultivate green manure crops and that it was necessary to solve the seed problem if the crops were to be grown in a large area. **“You need 12 kg of seeds per hectare, so you have to collect a good deal of seeds,”** said Kim Il Sung, and told special ways to gather the seeds.

Then, he said, **“In your country you can reap two maize crops and one green manure crop a year. If you grow green manure crops once a year, you'll be able to fertilize your land.”**

He continued to explain that as maize consumes the fertilizing elements considerably in the soil, it is necessary to add to the fertility of the soil steadily and that if the soil is to be fertile, it is essential to cultivate green manure crops and apply and spread manures.

Joseph was listening with all his attention.

Kim Il Sung stressed again that the growing of green manure crops is quite contributable to the fertility of the soil,

and that it will lead to increased harvest of grains and fodder for boosting the meat production. “**The green manure crops contain nitrogen and phosphorus, so they are very helpful to other crops. If you irrigate the land in addition, you’ll be able to produce ten tons of maize per hectare successfully. I hope your farm will be a model and propagate your experience all across the country.**”

Joseph said in a thankful voice, “I’ve toured many countries to talk to people who style themselves as master of farming. But none of them was so versed in green manure crops as you are. I dare say you’re the real authority on green manure crop growing in the world.”

### **“Where Did He Go to College?”**

On December 5, 1983 Kim Il Sung had talks with Burnham, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, on a visit to the DPRK and gave a luncheon in his honour.

Having exchanged toasts, Kim Il Sung asked Viola, the first lady of Guyana, “**I hear you were under the care of our doctor in your country. How are you feeling now? Weren’t you scared when you were put to acupuncture by our doctor?**”

She answered with a light smile, “I was a little scared at first, but not after a few rounds of treatment. And I got well under the care of the Korean doctors.”

Burnham joined the topic after a minute of silence. “My wife

has become younger since she was treated by the Korean doctors." He looked very happy.

"**That sounds very good,**" Kim Il Sung said wearing a pleasant smile. Then, he said, "**The doctors of my country are good at the remedies of acupuncture and cupping.** At present our Koryo physicians run a clinic in Austria and apply Koryo treatments to the local people. Their service enjoys good comments. Our Koryo physicians have also opened a clinic in Hong Kong and are giving medical service to the inhabitants successfully."

Listening with curiosity, Burnham shook his head dubiously, saying he could hardly understand how cupping could be so effective in treatment.

Kim Il Sung wore a smile, and explained, "**The remedy of cupping isn't mysterious at all. The cupping remedy will be more effective when it is applied after an injection is given for an intractable disease.** On one occasion a Japanese capitalist was attended to by our doctors for Koryo remedies. When he recovered successfully he made a great publicity of his case, and now many Japanese go to Hong Kong to see our Koryo physicians."

Making a nod repeatedly, Burnham said it was very wonderful that the Koryo remedies were so simple but effective.

Kim Il Sung went on with his explanation, "**Almost 70 per cent of the Koreans believe in the traditional Korean medicine.** The practitioners of the Western medicine despise the Koryo

medicine. Their basic treatments are to kill the pathogenic bacteria by germicidal agents and perform surgical operations. Our people have long resorted to the Koryo medicine. The Koryo doctors don't use surgical methods; their basic remedy is to improve the vitality of people by administering enough tonics to overcome diseases.”

More interested, Burnham asked, “You say the basic remedy in the Koryo medicine is to improve the vitality, and what kind of materials do you use for the tonics?”

Kim Il Sung replied, “**The major materials of the Koryo medicine are insam (ginseng), tangwi (*Angelica gigas Nak.*) and some other herbs and deer antlers. Rinser, a German writer, recovered her sight after she was looked after by our Koryo doctors.**”

His discourse continued, “Once there is a correct diagnosis, the case can be treated perfectly by traditional Korean remedies. It is advisable to combine the modern medicine and the Koryo medicine in order to make a correct diagnosis. After having a good diagnosis through blood screening and other methods of the modern medicine, you'd better have treatment through the Koryo medicine.”

Now Burnham's wife asked if the patients in hospitals had the choice between the modern medicine and the Koryo medicine.

Kim Il Sung said, “**What kind of treatment should be taken is decided by the doctors through consultation. One thing is to apply modern medical methods basically while combining it**

**with a Koryo remedy, and the other is to adopt Koryo medical methods while combining it with a modern one.”**

Burnham gazed at Kim Il Sung with a sense of awe.

When the luncheon was over, Burnham asked one of the Korean guides, “Where did President Kim Il Sung go to college?”

The guide was at a loss to know what he meant.

Burnham asked again, “He is well versed in the Koryo medicine, so I think he is qualified for a Koryo practitioner. Am I right?”

The guide gave a smile, saying, “Our President couldn’t go to college because he had to fight the Japanese imperialists from his early years for national liberation.”

“Is that true?” Burnham was surprised. Then he said to his wife, “It’s amazing. It’s astonishing, he is a master of medicine, as well as politics, the economy and military affairs.”

## **A Simple Problem**

On June 6, 1976 President Kim Il Sung left Pyongyang together with Didier Ratsiraka, President of Madagascar, who was on a visit to Korea, to look at the then Kumgsong Tractor Factory.

The car was cruising along the bank of the Taedong River. Ratsiraka, feeling it unbearable to waste even a minute in the car, addressed Kim Il Sung, “We cannot afford to give jobs to all people in my country as we were a colony of the imperialists in the past. We have many jobless people. We set it as an important

task to solve the problem of unemployment in the stage of the national democratic revolution. But we haven't got any particular way to let all the many people have jobs. I think it's very difficult to solve the unemployment problem considering the condition of my country." Ratsiraka looked worried.

Kim Il Sung said that was something easy to solve.

"Easy?" said Ratsiraka in surprise. "Would you tell me how you solved the problem of the jobless immediately after liberation?"

Kim Il Sung explained, "**T**here were crowds of jobless people in my country, too. I saw some spending the day hopelessly while waiting for someone to buy an apple on their counters, while others were wandering about looking for something to carry on their A-frame carrier. To solve the unemployment problem it is necessary to launch construction projects extensively. So, we started an irrigation project first and mobilized peasants for it."

"Do you mean you created jobs by an irrigation project?" Ratsiraka asked.

"**S**ure," Kim Il Sung said. "**A**nd we built many factories including large ones. Immediately after liberation we gave jobs to all people by arranging irrigation, road and other projects. People got jobs gradually and the rehabilitation work made rapid progress."

"That's very nice experience," Ratsiraka spoke admiringly.

"**W**e also organized production cooperatives," Kim Il Sung told.

“What do you mean by the production cooperative?” Ratsiraka asked.

**“Even the cobblers would rather work together in a group than do their jobs separately. We organized cobblers in production cooperatives. We also encouraged the fishermen to form similar cooperatives.”**

Ratsiraka was very glad to hear the words. He said, “That’s excellent experience. It’s a good way to get rid of unemployment. We’re going to solve the unemployment problem the way you did. You’re absolutely right when you say it’s easy to solve the unemployment problem.” Ratsiraka was very happy, and the car was now near the factory.

### **The Canadian Chicken**

While staying in Korea for the second time in early December 1983, Forbes Burnham, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, was enthusiastic about learning more about the achievements and experience of the Korean people in socialist construction.

Over a luncheon on December 5, President Kim Il Sung told him about what had happened when his country began to grow Cuban chicken in order to solve the problem of meat and eggs.

One year Korea received a lot of breeding chicken from Cuba. The Korean officials concerned, thinking it necessary to make chicken houses and keep them at a certain degree of

temperature as it is hotter in Cuba than in Korea, built chicken houses with glass windows at a good amount of expenditure. As a result, keeping chickens turned out to be more costly than producing meat and eggs.

Learning the story, Kim Il Sung thought how to increase the production of meat and eggs while cutting the cost as much as possible. At last he knew he had an idea. He gave an instruction that the chickens were distributed to peasants and put outdoors so that they could be adapted to the local conditions. Then he acquainted himself of how the work was going on.

With keen interest people watched how the chickens were acclimatized. Soon afterwards they were more than surprised, for the chickens grew healthy and fat outdoors even when there was no arrangement for special temperature. And they laid eggs in numbers.

Kim Il Sung found it strange. He had thought it would take at least two or three years for the Cuban chicken to be acclimatized to the Korean conditions. But the practice was far from his anticipation.

He summoned some of the officials concerned. He told them that the chickens from Cuba seemed not to be of Cuban origin but that of a certain country whose physiographical features were similar to Korea. **“Ask the Cubans of the problem at once,”** he told.

A reply came from Cuba in a few days, which went that the chickens they had sent to Korea was of Canadian origin. Now they knew the chickens were a Canadian breed.

Telling the story, Kim Il Sung said, “**It is hotter in my country than it is in Canada, but it is cooler here than it is in Cuba. The chickens from Cuba liked the climate here as if they were back home where it is cool.**” He smiled pleasantly.

Burnham shared the smile before saying seriously, “It isn’t a story for fun alone. Hearing your story I realize your perfect insight again. I’ve never heard a story about a person recovering the home of chicken.”

### **Astounding Capacity of Mental Calculation**

On October 5, 1993 President Kim Il Sung received a delegation from Kim Il Sung Agricultural Institute in Guinea. Present on the occasion were senior economic officials of Korea.

Hearing the achievements in their researches from the head of the delegation who was the chief of the institute, Kim Il Sung was very satisfied. He said, “**Solving the food problem precisely means the assurance of national sovereignty and independence. If you no longer import food from abroad, that will be the settlement of a big problem.**”

He asked the head of the delegation how much food his country imported annually.

The Guinean answered, “Four hundred thousand tons.”

Kim Il Sung said, “**The current price of rice is US\$250 per ton, so 400 000 tons cost US\$100 million. If Guinea stops buying grain from other countries and solves the food problem**

**by itself, it will be tantamount to earning US\$100 million.”**

Then, he asked about the area of arable land and the population of Guinea.

The head of the Guinean delegation answered that the area of arable land was 500 000 hectares, including 50 000 hectares under irrigation, and that the population was 6 500 000.

Turning to the Korean officials Kim Il Sung asked them how much grain Guinea would need when the per-capita consumption of food was estimated at 300 kg a year. The officials calculated the amount and answered.

Kim Il Sung thought for a minute before saying definitely, “**You’re all wrong. That’ll be 1 950 000 tons.**” Then he spoke to the head of the foreign delegation, “**Two million tons of grain will be enough to your country a year. You say you have 500 000 hectares of arable land. If you produce ten tons of grain per hectare by expanding the area of land under irrigation and introducing double-cropping, you’ll obtain a total of 5 000 000 tons.**”

Now he asked the Korean officials again how much that amount of grain was worth in currency. That was a second question. The officials got to calculation, but none of them could produce any answers for a good while. Presently, Kim Il Sung turned to the foreign guests and said that 5 000 000 tons of grain were worth US\$1 250 000 000 and that their country would become a rich country with that amount of grain. Putting his thumb up, he went on, “**If you have enough food, you will have nothing to be**

**afraid of. The weather is hot in your country, so clothing is no problem for you. Six metres of cloth will be enough for each person in your country a year. So, the annual consumption of cloth will be 40 000 000 metres for the total population numbering 6 500 000. This is not a large amount.”**

Then, he asked his officials if they knew how much cotton was needed to make a metre of cloth.

No one knew.

Noting that he was sorry they didn’t know, Kim Il Sung said it was 200 grammes.

He then asked the head of the Guinean delegation if they grew cotton in his country.

“Sure, we do,” replied the Guinean.

Making a slight nod, Kim Il Sung said some 50 000 hectares of land would be enough to meet the demand for cotton in Guinea, and that if the per-hectare yield of cotton was estimated at 600 kilogrammes and double-cropping was introduced in the 50 000 hectares, the total harvest would reach 60 000 tons.

He turned his face to the Korean officials once again and asked how much cloth could be produced with 60 000 tons of cotton. That was a fourth question. One of the officials gave his answer first, followed by some other officials. But their answers were all different.

Kim Il Sung shook his head in disappointment, saying, “**You can produce 300 000 000 metres of cloth.”**

He spoke to his guests that that would be an amazing amount

which would be enough to solve the problem of clothing in their country.

All the members of the delegation were struck with admiration. The head said, “This is truly amazing. You know my country’s situation very well, and you have offered good solutions to the food and clothing problems for our people. It is a mystery you do the sums so well when you’re in your 80s.”

Kim Il Sung said that there was nothing mysterious about it, and that he was accustomed to such a way of calculating as he had used his brains all his life to provide the people with better eating and clothing conditions. He stressed with a smile, “**You must be good at calculating if you want to serve the people.**”

### **Twenty-four Years Later**

On February 20, 1993 President Kim Il Sung received Miguel Mejia, general secretary of the United Leftist Movement of Dominica who was on a visit to Korea. On the occasion Mejia conveyed former Dominican President Juan Bosch’s kind regards to the DPRK President.

Kim Il Sung thought for a minute before asking his interpreter—who was sitting next to him—if the former Dominican President was the figure whom he met and shared a dinner with at a guest house in 1969 during his stay in Korea.

The interpreter answered he was right.

Kim Il Sung, wearing a bright smile, recalled how he and

Bosch had talks, how he had had a serious conversation with him about a number of topics of the international political situation, and how enthusiastic and kind-hearted Bosch was. “**I’m very happy to have his warm greetings,**” the Korean leader said. “**I’d like you to convey my warm greetings to him when you return home.**”

“You have got an amazing memory,” Mejia exclaimed, “how could you so vividly remember what happened 24 years ago?”

It was not too much when Mejia was surprised, for Juan Bosch had been to Korea quite a long time before. Even after a lapse of 24 years Kim Il Sung still remembered the date of his meeting with Bosch, the place, the content of their conversation and Bosch’s features—so vividly as if it were a thing of only yesterday. Engaging himself in external activities, he met hundreds of foreign figures a year. Considering this, he must have met innumerable foreign personalities over the 24 years.

That evening Mejia told Korean officials, “Today I was greatly moved to see President Kim Il Sung. I was struck with admiration especially for his mental capacity. His memory is more than a mystery to me. It surpasses all the memories humanity has ever had.”

## A Stenographer Recognized

Jiang Zemin, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, gave a banquet on September 11,

1990 in honour of President of the DPRK Kim Il Sung's China visit.

During the party Kim Il Sung, looking around the Chinese officials at table, set his eyes on one of them, and told Jiang Zemin, pointing at him, that he remembered seeing him.

Observing the official, the Chinese leader said with a smile, "That is Xu Ruixin, vice-director of the General Office of our Party. He recently visited your country as head of a delegation of Party officials. You must have met him then."

Kim Il Sung shook his head, saying that he had failed to meet the delegation due to a lack of time and that the Chinese looked familiar to him.

"You must have mistaken him for someone else," Jiang Zemin said.

**"No. I'm quite sure,"** declared Kim Il Sung, and searched his memory. In a moment a happy smile came to his face. **"Now I remember,"** he said confidently. **"He was a stenographer."**

"Is that so?" said Jiang Zemin dubiously. "As far as I know, he has never worked as a stenographer."

**"I'm sure. He was a stenographer,"** confirmed Kim Il Sung, and called Xu to his side.

The Chinese came up in haste and made a greeting reverentially.

Shaking him by the hand, Kim Il Sung said that it was a long time since he had seen him last.

Xu was at a loss to know what was happening.

Understanding his perplexity, Kim Il Sung asked him if he had ever been present at a conversation between Chairman Mao Zedong and himself as a stenographer.

Now Xu remembered. He answered, “I was present at your talks with Chairman Mao as a stenographer in 1963 when you visited China.” But he still looked doubtful.

**“It must have happened in 1964,”** Kim Il Sung corrected him.

“That’s right. It was in 1964,” Xu agreed.

Wearing a smile, Kim Il Sung said to Jiang Zemin, **“At that time I met Mao Zedong and held talks with him. I saw the vice-director sitting in a corner of the room, working as a stenographer. They say time flies like an arrow. The man who was a stenographer has grown up to be a functionary now.”**

Those present at the banquet were struck with wonder at Kim Il Sung’s remarkable memory.

Stenographers are seldom noticeable at the place of talks between chiefs of state, but the Korean leader recognized an ordinary stenographer of a foreign country who had been sitting in the corner of the place of negotiation nearly 30 years before, and honoured him for his successful career.

## **Origin of Dry Cough**

On September 25, 1980 Kim Il Sung gave a luncheon in honour of a delegation of the Japan Socialist Party Special

Committee on Korean Affairs led by Katsumata Seiichi, former Chairman of the Party Central Executive Committee and director of the Party's Institute for the Study of Socialist Theory.

At the luncheon Shimazaki Yuzuru, member of Japan's House of Representatives, said that he had learned something quite interesting in Korea.

**“What’s that?”** Kim Il Sung asked.

“Yesterday we saw the Korean feature film, *The Tale of Chun Hyang*,” began Shimazaki. “The characters in the film would make a few dry coughs outside the door of someone’s house before entering. In Japan, bureaucrats make a dry cough when they are wielding their authority or abusing their subordinates. But in Korea it seems one coughs to inform someone of one’s arrival. I found it very interesting.”

Kim Il Sung, affirming his observation, said, **“We Koreans have had this custom of coughing three times since olden times. The custom has its origin in Confucianism.”** Now he told a story about the origin.

One day Mencius entered his wife’s room, when, to his surprise, he saw his wife sitting with the upper half of her body naked. He was displeased at this, and told his mother about it, calling his wife a rude and vulgar woman. But his mother, who was wise and clever, scolded him instead, saying, “Your wife is far from rude and vulgar. She must have had a good reason for not wearing her clothes. You should have entered the room after making a cough first so that she could put her clothes on. It was not your wife but

you who were bad-mannered.” Hearing his mother, Mencius reproached himself. Afterwards he never failed to cough three times before entering others’ rooms. That was how the habit of three coughs came into existence in the Confucian world.

Concluding his story, Kim Il Sung said, “**I’m against Confucianism, but I think it is good to be courteous when entering someone’s room.**”

Hearing the story with interest, Shimazaki said he now learned how the Koreans began to make dry coughs. He agreed that he thought the polite manners of Confucianism admirable although he did not believe in Confucianism, either.

Affirming his words, Kim Il Sung stressed, “**We don’t think the Confucian doctrine bad entirely. We don’t tolerate the extremist views of setting the Confuscian doctrine against the socialist idea and asserting it is contrary against the socialist ethics. What we are against about the Confucian doctrine is the anti-popular nature of Confucianism that justifies the feudal state and social system and forces nonresistance and blind submission on the people. We never deny the need of human ethical basis prescribed by Confucianism in its Three Fundamental Principles and the Five Moral Disciplines in Human Relations.**”

Then, he mentioned that it had better let the young people read lots of classical works and that he would make sure that classic films like *The Tale of Chun Hyang* were produced in numbers. “**Young people should know the past things. It is**

**important to let them know national customs and way of life, too. I believe young people would not model themselves on the old things even if they are informed of the old things.”**

He told another story, which goes: One day an American went to see a Buddhist temple in Mt. Myohyang. After looking round the place, he asked a monk there if there were any young monks to succeed them. The monk said, “Why on earth would they choose to be monks when they can be well off without engaging themselves in Buddhism? It’s different from the days before national liberation when some people became monks hoping to have a life free from exploitation and oppression that were tormenting them. Now that there is no exploitation or oppression, and everyone can live happily, who would want to be a monk? There are trees and rocks alone in the mountains, but not women.”

Shimazaki smiled, admiring him for the versatility of his knowledge and infinite love of his nation.

### **Paektusan Blueberry Wine**

Kim Il Sung, on September 10, 1980, met a delegation of the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan headed by its chief Makieda Motohumi and gave a dinner party in honour of the delegation. One of the specialties on the table was the Paektusan Blueberry Wine. Having a sip of the wine which had enticingly unique appearance, taste and flavour, the members of the delegation were all praising it. Makieda scrutinized the mark

on the bottle. Then, shaking his head dubiously, he said to Kim Il Sung that although he had tasted all the celebrated wines of the world while touring many countries, he had never had such a unique wine as Paektusan Blueberry Wine.

Kim Il Sung said that the wine was made from the blueberry in the Mt. Paektu area, that the blueberry was richly available in Mt. Paektu, and that the blueberry trees bear black fruits which were used for the material of the blueberry wine.

Having another sip of the wine, Makieda praised it again.

Kim Il Sung, looking round the members of the delegation, told them, **“We’ve served the Blueberry Wine to many foreigners, and they said it was a rare wine. The Blueberry Wine has got an original taste different from the grape wine.”**

Then, he gave an account of what had happened when the Blueberry Wine was brewed for the first time: When they began to brew a wine from the blueberry, they tried to make it the way grape wine was done. They often asked for sugar. On one occasion Kim Il Sung advised them to add malt to the blueberry essence instead of bothering to put sugar in the sweet blueberry fruits, thus turning it bitter unnecessarily. But the wine manufacturers thought they could hardly make wine without sugar as they had no experience in brewing a wine from the blueberry. Kim Il Sung gave a detailed explanation of why they put sugar when they make grape wine, and told they did not have to use sugar to make wine from the blueberry. He then advised to put malt and get the blueberries fermented, which he said

convincingly would turn out a wine of unique flavour. Now the wine makers fermented the blueberries by adding malt instead of sugar. To their pleasant surprise, they got a marvellous wine which was totally different from the grape wine.

Finishing his account, Kim Il Sung noted, “**T**here’s no harmful substance in the Paektusan Blueberry Wine. It helps digestion very much. It is better than grape wine. You can drink it as much as you like, because you’ll never be drunk however much you have it. It isn’t high in alcoholic content.”

Makieda told with a smile that it was a pleasure to have a taste of the Paektusan Blueberry Wine on his visit to Korea, that he was sure grape wine was no match for the Blueberry Wine, and that he thought he would have to come to Korea more often partly because he wanted to have the pleasure of the drink.

Kim Il Sung smiled brightly, saying, “**W**e’d welcome you any time. We’ll give you as much Blueberry Wine as you want. My country has got generous people, beautiful scenery and a lot of good wines.”

### Rinser’s Admiration

On July 29, 1982 Kim Il Sung met Luise Rinser, a West German writer who was on a visit to Korea, and had a conversation. On a table in the meeting place there was litchi, a tropical species of plum, as well as some soft drinks. During the conversation Kim Il Sung asked her if she liked litchi. She said

she did.

The Korean leader said that Yang Guifei, chief concubine of the Tang emperor Xuanzong, had been very fond of the fruit, too, and that she had liked it so much that she had been made a laughing stock by Li Taipo who was a celebrated man of letters of the time. He then gave a hearty laugh.

Feeling quite interested, Rinser said she wanted to hear the story.

**“You want to hear it?”** he asked confirmingly, arousing greater interest. Now he began to tell an account:

Some one thousand years ago there was the Tang Dynasty in China, and the dynasty had an extremely beautiful woman. Her original name was Yang Taizhen. Born a daughter of a broken aristocrat in Shaanxi province, China, she became wife of Li Mao, Xuanzong’s son, for her outstanding beauty and artistic talent. But after his wife died, Xuanzong, finding Yang so desirable, took her as his mistress by giving her the position of chief concubine of the emperor. Yang was an avid lover of litchi, and ate it every day. The fruit had to be brought from Guangdong province. As there was no special means of transport, donkeys were used to carry the fruit. Litchi contains lots of protein, so most of them went rotten on the long way. Transporting the fruit was a great burden for the subjects. Nevertheless, they carried it, for they knew they would be beheaded mercilessly once they were found disobedient to Yang. She indulged herself in luxury and comfort at the cost of

indescribable pains and suffering of the people. Xuanzong, too, neglected his duties while doing nothing more than enjoying Yang's beauty and charm.

Such being the case, Li Taipo hated her, calling her a wicked woman.

One day the emperor summoned Li and issued the poet with an imperial edict that he must write, within two days, a reply to a letter from a neighbouring country. (Li was a drunk, but he excelled in writing.) Li made up his mind to take the opportunity to make a fool of the emperor and his lover, Yang Guifei. Now he told the emperor that while he was writing the letter, one person must rub an Indian ink stick on his inkstone, another must hold his beard so that it didn't interfere with his writing, and yet another must support his legs. The quality of the letter would be determined by the persons' social position, he stressed and added that as his letter would reflect the status of the emperor and the country, it was imperative for Yang to rub his ink stick, her younger sister to hold his beard and her younger brother to support his legs.

Xuanzong was perplexed. It was unimaginable for him to make Yang and her sister and brother perform such an ignoble task; more perplexing was that, if the story became known to the ordinary people, he did not know what would happen. The more he thought, the angrier he grew. He, however, had no alternative but to accept the request as he didn't know how to write a letter.

Thus, all the time Li was writing, the coquettish, haughty Yang

was rubbing an ink stick, her silver-candlestick-like fingers becoming black and dirty, her sister holding up his alcohol-wet beard in her perfumed hands, and her brother supporting the writer's legs, with his head inserted between the legs.

Kim Il Sung finished the story, and Rinser burst into laughter. Then, she said, "Li Taipo is well known in Europe, so I know about him. But I have not heard this tale. I guess you can read Chinese history books in the original."

**"I read Chinese and Russian books in their untranslated versions,"** replied the Korean leader.

Impressed by his knowledge, she said, "I've met many foreign heads of state, but I have yet to meet anyone who is as conversant with the history of other countries as you are. As a writer, I can only admire your profound knowledge."

### **Three Prostrations**

On June 28, 1992 Kim Il Sung had a conversation with William Taylor, deputy director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the US. During the talks the American said he found it very sultry in Korea and asked if such weather lasted for a long time.

Kim Il Sung explained that his country is under the influence of the temperate climate, that it is sultry in summer, and that there is the hot period of *Sambok* between July and August which lasts for 20-30 days when it keeps quite hot and damp.

Taylor, shaking his head, said there was no such period as *Sambok* in his country. He seemed unable to understand *Sambok*.

Kim Il Sung gave a good account of *Sambok* so that his guest could have an idea of the word: There is a long-standing word of *Sambok* in Korea. It literally means three prostrations—early, middle and late ones. The period between the early and the middle prostration spans ten days and that from the middle to the late one is another ten days. And yet in some years the time from the middle to the late prostration spans 20 days. The Three Prostrations means lying in the shade for rest.

Hearing the words, Taylor was wide-eyed with astonishment. He asked if it meant that they didn't do any jobs but idled away.

Kim Il Sung gave a hearty laugh. He then said, “**We revolutionaries have many things to do, and how could we relax in the shade? The description of the need in some books pertained to those who were rather rich in the contemporary time. The poor people had no time to summer even in the *Sambok* days. But now my people have some rest in this period. The Three Prostrations simply means the days of very sultry weather.**”

Taylor now seemed to understand. He said, “I know the Koreans are an industrious and diligent nation. When you said the Three Prostrations means lying in the shade for rest, it sounded quite strange to me.”

There was a burst of laughter among the people present.

After a pause Kim Il Sung talked in easy words about the weather and climate in the four seasons of Korea.

Taylor and his party were struck with admiration for the Korean leader's ability to make a simple and easy explanation of the local weather on the basis of as good knowledge as that of experts.

### **Wild Duck Hunting**

On one occasion Kim Il Sung received the Soviet ambassador to Korea Puzanov. He had talks about a number of matters including the one of developing the relations between the two countries for hours. At the close of the dialogue the Soviet diplomat, attracted to the Korean leader's way of chatting informally, told he wished he would go hunting wild ducks together with the President.

**“Do you like hunting wild ducks?”** asked Kim Il Sung with a smile.

“To be frank with you, it’s far more than my enjoyment,” Puzanov replied.

**“You sound very skilful at it.”**

“I’m sure I’m as good as experts.”

**“That’s marvellous. But I’m a poor hunter.”**

“You needn’t worry, Mr. President. I’ll tell you how to do it. Believe me, please, and I hope you will make a time for it.” Puzanov’s voice rang quite earnest.

Kim Il Sung, wearing a gentle smile, said he would try to

spare a time if it was his earnest desire.

Days later the President, together with the ambassador, left for a place in suburban Pyongyang along the bank of Taedong River to hunt wild ducks. After running a snow-covered country road for a good while, their jeeps arrived at a place on the riverside.

Kim Il Sung got down and stood on the bank, enjoying the sight of the river with his hands put to his sides. In the middle of the river mist was rising up gently and wild ducks were swimming leisurely.

Puzanov got down from his jeep and came up to him, saying, "There are lots of wild ducks. But the mist is too thick." His voice sounded rather unconfident. And yet he, clearing his throat, said there was nothing serious about it, and explained which part of the swimming duck should be aimed at, which part should be shot when the ducks were seated, and how to shoot when they were soaring into the air.

Kim Il Sung listened out, his face betraying no particular sign of emotion.

After the explanation, Puzanov said to Kim Il Sung that he and a Korean official would hunt wild ducks first, he down the river and a Korean official upstream. "Please stay here and look how we hunt, Mr. President," he asked politely.

Kim Il Sung nodded slightly instead of making any reply. A meaningful smile appeared in the corner of his mouth. Even after the Soviet diplomat and the Korean official took their places, he enjoyed the natural sight for a good while. Then, he

chose a suitable place and seated himself there after sweeping the snow off.

Presently there came a gun report from where Puzanov was. Then, a report also came from upstream. Whenever there were reports, the wild ducks desperately flew up and down the stream like tree leaves in the wind.

Kim Il Sung, who had been waiting for the moment, aimed at the wild ducks that were flying here and there amidst the thick mist, and pulled the trigger patiently. Sounds of reports echoed continuously.

Too absorbed in hunting, Puzanov didn't know the passage of time. Having fired the last bullet in his stock he came up to Kim Il Sung with a satisfied look.

**“How many ducks have you got?”** the President asked.

“The mist has been quite a trouble, yet I've taken seven.” His voice sounded proud. His eyes then turned to a pile of game and got stuck. A look of wonder and that of doubt took turns.

A Korean official whispered to Puzanov, “Mr. President has taken 58.”

“Gosh! It's unbelievable,” cried Puzanov.

“You're still ignorant,” the Korean told him. “Our leader shot two or three Japanese with a single shot even with his eyes shut when he was fighting an armed struggle against the Japanese aggressors.”

“Is that true?” Puzanov was awe-stricken, and then looked at the seven ducks in his hand and then the pile of 58 birds.

## **4. Father of the People**

### **Hobby**

In mid-April 1992 a delegation of journalists of the *Washington Times* of America visited Korea. It was made up of Joseph Schiner as head of the delegation and her sister as member. As soon as they set foot in Korea Schiner asked the Korean officials concerned repeatedly to let her meet President Kim Il Sung.

The DPRK leader received them on April 12. One of the questions Schiner asked on the occasion was, “What’s your hobby? Will you tell me of the amusement and sports, if any, that you enjoy?”

The President looked at Schiner and her sister for a while before answering, **“I have no particular hobby or amusement of my own.”**

“No?” The Schiner sisters were surprised. “And yet I believe you must be fond of something, even though it isn’t any hobby at all.”

Kim Il Sung gave a smile, instead of making any reply. After a pause he said that he thought he had two kinds of things to talk about if they were any hobby of his. Now he announced, **“I am fond of reading and I like mixing with the people and**

**sharing their company.”**

Schiner and her sister looked surprised again. Schiner said, “I’ve met many heads of state and proud politicians, and they say their hobby is hunting, fishing, swimming or entertainment. Never have I heard them say reading or mixing with the people and sharing their company is their hobby. Your hobby is too simple, and I doubt if it belongs to any hobby at all. But the meaning is as great as the universe. Your hobby is the greatest in the world. No one else can enjoy it for a hobby.”

### **“Silent Companion”**

Kim Il Sung met Oda Makoto, a writer and prominent social activist of Japan, on November 9, 1976. After having a conversation he gave a dinner party in his honour. At the time he talked of the situation of his country and a number of international matters citing special figures and instances.

Oda was astonished to find the Korean leader so erudite and well informed. He said, “I think you have had little time to read because you had to lead the anti-Japanese armed struggle and the Fatherland Liberation War. I wonder how you have got such a large stock of knowledge and information.”

Wearing a bright smile, Kim Il Sung said that he read not because he had time to read, and that he read at odd moments between battles during the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

“You read while you were fighting the guerrilla warfare?”

Oda was aghast.

**“Sure.”**

“It’s astonishing.”

**“I read a lot of Japanese and Russian books, too, during the time.”**

“What kind of books did you read?”

**I was an avid reader. I read most of the Chinese classics. I remember I read *Record of a Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms.*”**

“Did you read Russian fictions?”

**“I’ve read a lot of them, particularly Tolstoy.”**

“What about Dostoyevsky?”

**“Sure I did.”**

“You’ve read that much?”

**“Absolutely.”**

“It’s incredible. You’ve read more than me, a professional writer.”

**“Books are my ‘silent companion’.”**

“That’s a wise statement.”

## **The Masses Are My Teacher**

On August 31, 1975 Kim Il Sung met Inomata Hisao, Managing Editor of Japan’s Kyodo News Service who was on a visit to Korea, and arranged a luncheon in his honour.

At the luncheon Inomata inquired about issues concerning

Korea's economic fields—industry, agriculture and mining.

The President gave clear-cut answers to his questions.

Inomata was deeply impressed by Kim Il Sung's profound knowledge, and said, "You are better informed than the experts on several sectors of the national economy. Your range of knowledge is truly exceptional."

Saying with a smile on his face that his complements were quite excessive and that his knowledge was what he had been taught by the masses of the people, Kim Il Sung continued, "**I always go among the industrial workers, farm workers and scholars to talk to them. People offer me many good opinions. If one mingles with the masses, one will not commit the error of being subjective.**"

He went on to say that, as the farm workers had rich experience of agriculture, whereas the agronomists worked mainly with books, he could learn a lot from them. After a pause he declared, "**The masses, including the farm workers, are my teacher.**"

### **"I'm Happy to Have Another Lesson Today"**

Kim Il Sung paid a friendship visit to China in October 1991. During his stay he went to see a Buddhist temple in Yangzhou. While looking round the temple with interest, he stopped in front of a building that hung with the signboard reading "Great Hero Hall." He studied the inside of the house

attentively. Now his eyes turned to the signboard.

**“Great Hero Hall,”** he mumbled to himself in a low voice. Seconds passed before he repeated the name again to himself. Now he asked one of the resident monks, **“I see all the Buddhist temples have Great Hero Halls. The Pohyon Temple in Mt. Myohyang in our country also has got it. What does the Great Hero Hall mean?”**

“Eh?” the monk was wide-eyed.

**“Why are you so surprised?”** Kim Il Sung asked again.

The monk spoke his mind frankly, “We’ve had many visitors here but none of them have ever asked the meaning of the name of the hall. I’m embarrassed to be asked such a question.”

Then, he explained about what the name stands for: A Buddhist temple is where services are performed before the Buddhist image. Generally speaking, one temple has got several buildings, and the statue of Sakyamuni, father of Buddhism, is enshrined in the largest and best one of them. In the Buddhist world the Buddha and bodhisattvas are reverentially called Saint or Great Teacher. And Sakyamuni is particularly called Saint Great Hero. The hall that has got the statue of Sakyamuni is called after the title, hence the name of Great Hero Hall.

When the monk finished his explanation, Kim Il Sung said satisfactorily, **“I’m happy to have another lesson today.”**

Overwhelmed with emotion, the monk said, “I know you’re a respectful man of worldwide fame. How could you say you’ve learned something at this humble temple?”

With a happy smile, Kim Il Sung said that man should try to learn wherever he is and that there is a famous phrase which goes, “Learn even in your deathbed.”

The monk said reverentially, “You’re really a great saint.”

### A “People-bound Train Ticket”

On September 7, 1989 Kim Il Sung received Piore, chief of the Beijing branch of Italian Radio and Television. On the occasion the Italian informed Kim Il Sung that his branch had produced the feature-length documentary *Korea—Mystery and Glory*, and that he was planning to write a novel about the President’s anti-Japanese armed struggle. He asked the President to tell him about his activities among the masses in the early period of his revolutionary career.

Kim Il Sung pleasantly complied with his request. He first said that the masses of the people are the motive force of the revolution, and that success or failure in the revolution depends on how they are awakened and trained. He paused for a while as he recollected his past with deep emotion, and continued that he had frequently visited rural villages in those days, that as there had been many illiterates in the countryside, he had made a point of learning how to write a funeral oration and how to write for others. He noted, **“I learned such things purposefully. Whenever I was asked by the peasants to write a funeral oration, I would agree. I also knew how to**

**work as scrivener. A scrivener should know how to write a letter of complaint or accusation, or an affidavit to bring a lawsuit against someone. In the olden times such legal documents had their own unique style of writing. Documents not written in the proper style were rejected.”**

As far as memorial orations were concerned, the President told the story of something that had happened a long time before. The story went as follows.

Once, while conducting activities in a rural village together with a few young communists including Cha Kwang Su and Kye Yong Chun, Kim Il Sung was lodging at a farmhouse.

One day he returned to this lodging from work at around midnight. As he entered the courtyard, Cha and Kye, who had been sitting under the eaves waiting for him, rushed out to him in delight. Kim Il Sung asked them why they hadn't gone to bed. Cha told him the reason.

When Cha and Kye had finished supper, their host had asked them timidly, “Sirs, tomorrow is the day of the memorial service for my grandfather. Although we're poor, we've prepared a ceremonial altar. If you could write a memorial oration, we will perform the ancestral rite at dawn tomorrow.”

Cha had readily agreed to the request, for he had believed his friend Kye could do it though he himself had no idea of the oration. But it had turned out Kye was ignorant of it, too.

The situation had been very awkward. In the kitchen the ceremonial altar had been already arranged; the host's family

had been eagerly waiting for the oration. Kye had been making things difficult for Cha, complaining that he had told a lie and so almost ruined the ancestral rite. “I know it’s late, but why don’t we make an apology right now and look for someone who can write it?” Kye had argued. Cha had been at a loss what to do, giving heavy sighs alone.

Just at the moment Kim Il Sung had come back.

Hearing of the situation, Kim Il Sung gave a hearty laugh and asked how Cha and Kye who were proud men of letters could be confounded by such a trifling matter as writing a memorial oration. He said in a pleasant voice that he would work for them and that they should reward him generously in return for his service.

Kim Il Sung wrote the ceremonial address, and the service proceeded smoothly. After the rite, the host brought them a good amount of rice cake from the altar as a token of his gratitude for the address.

Kye was all smiles, saying that he was being treated to the rice cake thanks to Kim Il Sung.

But Cha looked serious. He said, “Both you and I are still little prepared for the revolution. If we had failed to write the address today, what would have happened? This is not a simple matter for those who have set out on the road of revolution. Let’s draw a lesson from this. We should bear in mind that we should have versatile knowledge so that we can go among the people.”

Concluding the story, Kim Il Sung said with a smile, “**Cha was right when he said that. Revolutionaries should know everything if they want to go among the people; versatile knowledge is as good as a ticket for a train bound for the people.”**

Piore nodded and said politely, “That’s quite meaningful. The statement of ‘ticket for a train bound for the people’ is to come from no one else than you.”

### **A Story About Willows**

In mid-March 1981 Asukata Ichio, chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Japan Socialist Party, visited Pyongyang. Kim Il Sung held talks with him and gave a banquet in his honour.

On March 16 the Japanese gave a return banquet, prior to his return home. On the occasion Asukata told the Korean leader of his impressions from his visit to the newly-built Munsu Street which is almost as large as a single town with extensive resident quarters, and suggested that apple trees be planted along the street.

Kim Il Sung said that apple trees looked good but were difficult to tend as they were often infested with insects, and he recalled something that had happened soon after the [Korean] war. “**One day a 70-year-old man sent me a letter. He wrote that since olden times Pyongyang had been called Ryugyong** (Ryu

means willow tree and Gyong means capital city—Tr.) **and he wondered why other species of trees apart from willows were planted along the streets in Pyongyang. After reading the letter I felt I had made a mistake.”**

He continued: Willow trees are not suitable for planting along roadsides because the blossom floats on the wind in spring making the streets dirty and they are tall, have many branches and cast a shadow over buildings. However, I made sure that willows were planted in several streets in Pyongyang out of respect for the opinions of the people. Thereafter, we planted willows along several streets in Pyongyang, including the street in front of the Kumsusan Assembly Hall and that from Pyongyang Railway Station into the city centre.

He told his guest that after reading the old man's letter, he could not sleep for several nights on account of his self-reproach for the mistake he had made, and that he had had the matter of planting a large number of willows in Pyongyang discussed at a session of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. Then he had written a reply to the old man in which he gave his word that he would have a willow street laid out in Pyongyang in deference to his opinion.

Asukata said, “There is no record in world history of a head of state replying by letter to an ordinary old man. It is, indeed, a new legend about respect for the people, a legend that can be created only by Your Excellency because you respect the people above all else.”

## **Something That Cannot Be Bartered for Gold**

On July 22, 1983 President Kim Il Sung met West German writer Luise Rinser. The guest commented that she felt refreshed whenever she came to Korea as the air was so clean.

Referring to the fact that environmental protection was being done properly in Korea, Kim Il Sung said, **“We always consider the interests of the masses of the people before anything else in dealing with all affairs.”**

He told her what had happened when some gold deposits had been under development in Mt. Myohyang. Learning of the project he had dissuaded the officials concerned from mining them, he said, and continued. **“I told the officials that the scenery of Mt. Myohyang could not be bartered for some tons of gold, that we could do without gold, and that people would be truly delighted if they could go sightseeing in Mt. Myohyang and have a pleasant time there.”**

Kim Il Sung had severely reproached the officials concerned for developing a gold mine in Mt. Myohyang, explaining that rare and beautiful birds, including bluebirds, would be frightened away by the sound of blasting at the mine and that water from the dressing plant would flow down into the Chongchon River, killing the sweetfish there.

Recalling the story, Kim Il Sung said he could not let the scenery of Mt. Myohyang be spoiled in exchange for a few tons

of gold, and that it was now a favourite holiday and sightseeing resort of the Korean people.

**“The interests of the masses cannot be bartered for gold,”**  
he declared.

## **Echoes Down the Centuries**

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Edited by Kim Jun Hyok

Published by the Foreign Languages

Publishing House, DPR Korea

Issued in Juche 103(2014)

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<http://www.naenara.com.kp>

Pyongyang, Korea

Juche 103(2014)

ISBN 978-9946-0-1201-8

A standard linear barcode representing the ISBN number 978-9946-0-1201-8.

9 789946 012018 >